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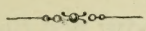


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THE EASTERN QUESTION :

ITS FACTS & FALLACIES.

By MALCOLM MAC COLL, M.A.

' For freedom's battle, once begun,
Bequeathed by bleeding sire to son,
Though baffled oft, is ever won.'

The Giaour.

With a Map.

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PREFACE.

A GLANCE at the Table of Contents will show that this volume aims at giving a more comprehensive view of the Eastern Question than has yet been attempted. The author believes that his conclusions follow, by logical necessity, from the facts which he has marshalled in support of them; but, however that may be, the facts themselves are indisputable. His witnesses, too, whether as regards the principles and tendencies of Islam in general, or the particular development of it which we observe in the Turkish Empire, are for the most part unwilling witnesses—honest men, who have been constrained by loyalty to the truth to deliver judgment in opposition to their cherished prepossessions and natural bias. The author's views in respect to Turkey are based mainly, though not entirely, on a careful examination of all the Parliamentary Papers on the state of the Turkish Empire published since the Crimean War. His brief sketch of Arab rule in Spain and Sicily is also founded, as the reader will see, on standard authorities. With that part of his subject the author has been for some time tolerably familiar, having first interested

himself in the study of it during a prolonged visit to Sicily, since repeated, in 1868.

It was not till his return from the East of Europe last October, that the author resolved to write upon the subject at all; and the analysis of Parliamentary Papers and other sources of evidence occupied his time uninterruptedly till the beginning of January, when he began—what has been comparatively a much easier task—the actual writing of his book. In point of style and literary execution the volume has, no doubt, suffered from the rapidity with which it has been written; but the facts and arguments are not affected by this circumstance; and it is on these, rather than on graces of style, that the author relies. His aim has been to prove, by evidence which is above suspicion and incontrovertible, that the Government of Turkey has been going on—steadily, systematically, and on principle—from bad to worse from the Crimean War till now; that there is absolutely no security to the non-Mussulman subjects of the Empire for life, or honour, or religious freedom, or property; that this is inevitable and of course while the Government of the Porte continues practically independent; that the Turkish Government is at this moment on the verge of dissolution—a catastrophe from which the enforcement, by the Great Powers, of a scheme of real reform giving practical autonomy to the disturbed provinces, offers the only escape; that a sincere resolution on the part of any two of the Great Powers to coerce Turkey would insure the obedience of the Porte, while the policy which seems to have prevailed necessitates war

within a few—probably a very few—months, and with war the total collapse of the Turkish Empire, and the precipitation of several political problems which are hardly ripe for solution, and which a wise statesmanship should have striven to mature gradually.

For all these conclusions the author believes that he has furnished sound and stable reasons, based on evidence which hardly admits of refutation. Discarding theories and sentiment, he has appealed throughout to the stern logic of facts—many of them, as he believes, not otherwise accessible to English readers. The present is one of those crises which are sometimes a turning-point in a nation's history. For nations, as for individuals, which choose a wrong course from deliberate selfishness, there is sometimes 'no place of repentance, though sought carefully with tears.'

Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of truth with falsehood, for the good or evil side.
Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering each the bloom
or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand and the sheep upon the right;
And the choice goes by for ever 'twixt that darkness and that light.

A 'great cause' is now, humanly speaking, trembling in the balance, and on England apparently is laid the responsibility of deciding its issue. How terrible that responsibility is, the facts recorded in the following pages abundantly show. If the men and women of England could only be brought to realise the true condition, or even an approximation to the true condition, of the millions of human beings who are at this moment writhing in the agony of a bondage more

cruel and debasing than any that the world has ever seen, they would certainly rise in their might and sweep away into space all the charlatanry of an effete diplomacy, that seeks to hide its impotence under the guise of childish Protocols, at which one might laugh, if the lives and honour of some fourteen millions of people, as noble and virtuous as any in the world, were not in question. The author trusts that the following pages will, with the blessing of a higher Power, help to dissipate a few at least of the dense clouds of ignorance that envelope the true bearings and issues of 'this great argument.' In his humble judgment it is not a question of religion, but of the elementary rights of humanity and the primary principles of natural justice; and his sympathy with the oppressed, as well as his indignation against a great and an intolerable wrong, would be none the less sincere and energetic if the Mussulmans were the victims and the Christians their tormentors. He has as little sympathy with some of the leading organs of public opinion when they advocate the divine right of Englishmen to tyrannise over Mussulmans in India, as when they advocate the indefeasible and eternal right of the Turk to torture, ravish, and slay defenceless Christians in Europe—provided only that 'British interests' are subserved by the anguish of the victims. The great nation of England is indeed become degenerate if it do not make short work of this brutal policy when its full iniquity has been brought home to its heart and conscience.

CONTENTS.



INTRODUCTION.

Independence of Turkey and British interests—Doctrine of the <i>Pall Mall Gazette</i> and its consequences—Territorial divisions of Turkey.—Populations of Turkey: Races and Religions—Christian Slaves and Mussulman Slaves: their sympathies and antipathies—Practical working of Ottoman system of Government	PAGE 1
--	--------

CHAPTER 1.

THE RAYAHS OF TURKEY.

Their condition discussed under the four heads of:—1. Security for life—2. Security for honour—3. Security for religious freedom—4. Security for property	28
---	----

SECTION I. SECURITY FOR LIFE.

Evidence of British Consuls—Syrian massacres: their cause and motive—Periodical massacres in Turkey only exhibitions on a large scale of what goes on all the year round in detail—A mendacious book on Bulgaria—Trustworthy witnesses—Examples of Turkish misrule and abnormal cruelty—Studied indignities offered to Christians and to their religion	51
---	----

SECTION II. SECURITY FOR HONOUR.

Virtue and beauty of the Bulgarian women—Daily outrages on their honour in ordinary times—Examples of fiendish torture on women in ordinary times—Inability of men to protect their	
---	--

women—National character of the Slaves—The Lucretia of Bulgaria: a tragic story of 1841—Consequent insurrection and frightful atrocities—The Haiduks—Forcible conversions to Islam—Violation of female chastity rewarded by Turkish Government—A Fallacy exposed	PAGE 70
--	---------

SECTION III. SECURITY FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

Intolerable wretchedness of the Rayah's lot—Rayahs and their Bishops—Armenians and their Patriarch—Causes of Bulgarian Schism—Religious intolerance of the Turks—Value of Turkish Promises—Illustrative cases—The Multeka—Sir G. Campbell's opinion controverted—Utopian Legislation—Code of the Multeka unrepeatable—Islam essentially intolerant—Legal indignities put upon Christians—Turkish Toleration explained—Insecurity for religious freedom the normal condition of the Rayahs	87
---	----

SECTION IV. SECURITY FOR PROPERTY.

Land Laws of Turkey—Land tenure of Rayahs—Tithe farming—Taxation: its amount and details—Condition of Rayah and Mussulman compared—Compulsory hospitality imposed on Rayahs—Irregular exactions—Turkish Police—Albania; its real condition very different from Sir P. Colquhoun's imaginative description—A plausible objection answered—The case summed up	115
---	-----

CHAPTER II.

TURKISH MISRULE INCURABLE.

A plea on behalf of Turkey—The Turkish Government the Chief Criminal—Proofs of this indictment—The Porte glories in its iniquity—Humanity of Mussulmans to Christians punished as a crime—Reason why Turkish misrule is incurable—Midhat's constitution analysed, and shown to be an imposture—Turkish official account of the constitution—Degeneration of the Turkish race—Turkish devotions—Mr. Urquhart on Islam—Condition of women in Turkey—Turkish population gangrened by the sins of the Cities of the Plain—State of Albania described by a British Consul	149
--	-----

CHAPTER III.

MUSSULMAN RULE IN SPAIN AND SICILY.

Difference between Turk and Moor—Redeeming points in Moorish Domination—Another side to the picture—Moorish civilisation an exotic—Condition of Christians in Spain under the Moors—Unfaithfulness of Spanish Moors—Moorish atrocities in Spain—Moorish <i>régime</i> characterised by Prescott as ‘a ferocious despotism’—This opinion confirmed by other authorities—Mussulman rule in Sicily—Intensity of its religious intolerance as described by Amari—Its inevitable decadence, and why—Mussulman rule in India ‘a disgrace to civilisation’—Its intolerance	PAGE 191
---	----------

CHAPTER IV.

DR. BADGER ON ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY.

Dr. Badger's Letter to the <i>Pall Mall Gazette</i> —Dr. White's ‘famous Bampton Lecture’ an imposture—Dr. Badger's theory conclusively refuted by himself	219
--	-----

CHAPTER V.

THE LITTLE RIFT WITHIN THE LUTE.

Futility of giving Turkey another chance, and why—Constitution of the Turkish Government examined and shown to be incapable of Reform—Infallibility of Islam and Ultramontaniam compared and contrasted—Islam a crystallisation, not an organism—Principle of spontaneous dissolution in every Mussulman State—The pattern man of Islam—Sketch of Mahomet's character—Influence of his character on his followers—His dealings with the Jews—His frightful cruelty and sensuality—Bulgarian atrocities a legitimate outcome of Islam—Saint-Hilaire and Dr. Muir on Mahomet and Islam—Bulgarian atrocities and reign of terror in France compared—Difference between the atrocities of Turkey and those of other nations—The three radical evils of Islam	232
--	-----

CHAPTER VI.

THE ALTERNATIVE.

Lord Salisbury's opinion combated—A choice of evils—Various Solutions of Eastern Question discussed—The Bulgarian problem easy of solution—Character of Bulgarians—State of education—Municipal institutions in Bulgaria—A striking example of Turkish rule—Relations between Mussulmans and Christians in Bulgaria—The Pomaks in favour of Conference programme, and advise coercion of Turkey—Precedent of intervention and coercion in Syria—Autonomy for disturbed Provinces the kindest Policy for Turkey—Alternative schemes for Bulgaria—Mussulmans and Christians under Russian rule—Bosnia a more difficult problem, and why—Bishop Strossmayer's Solution—Religious toleration in Servia—Who caused the failure of the Conference at Constantinople? PAGE 261

CHAPTER VII.

THE RUSSIAN BUGBEAR.

Great Names no guarantee against political delusions—Historical illustrations—Russia and India—Conquest of India by Russia an impossibility—Ruinous to Russia even if possible—Such a design would prove Russia to be a nation of lunatics—Russia may give us trouble in India, but for another reason—Suicidal policy of Russophobists—Russia and Constantinople—Reasons why Russia has no designs on Constantinople—Political morality of Russia and England compared—Russia and Khiva—A statement of facts—Authorities quoted—England and the opium trade—Emancipation of serfs in Russia—Incidents of English rule in India—Sir G. C. Lewis on bugbears 297

CHAPTER VIII.

WHO ARE THE CREDULOUS ?

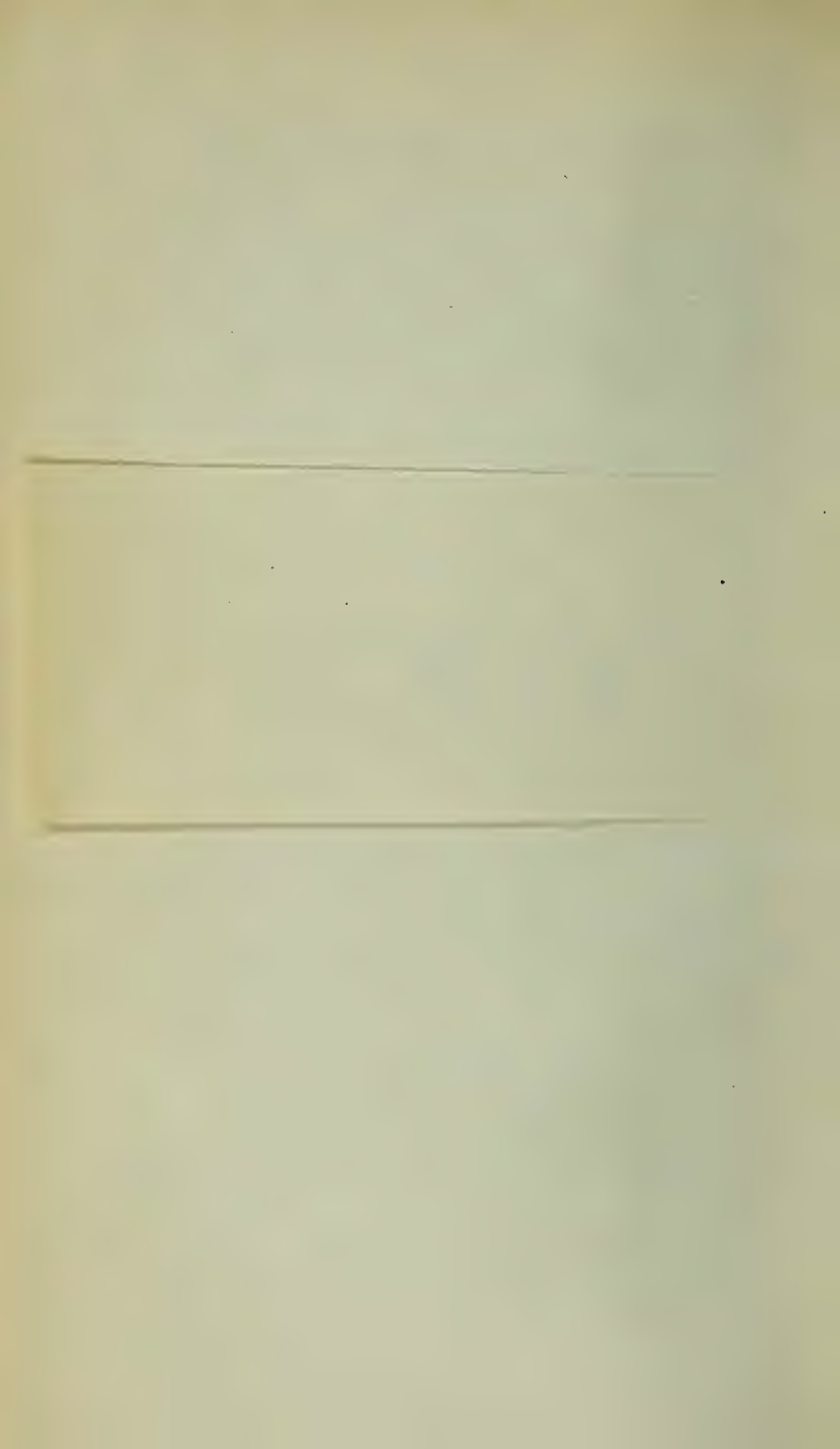
The Question examined and illustrated—The Attorney-General on Russian and Turkish atrocities—Facts and Fictions—Historical summary of relations between Russia and Khiva—Causes and justification of Kaufmann's expedition—Alleged atrocities—Gromof's narrative—Credulity and incredulity exemplified—Impalements in Bosnia—Antecedent probabilities—Overwhelm-

ing evidence rejected in favour of absurd surmises—Foreign Office suppressing evidence—Consular genesis of myths—Mr. Lowther after dinner—The two pictures—Lord Beaconsfield on the Circassians—Consuls writing to Order—A British Ambassador receiving presents from the Sultan—Sir H. Elliot suppressing evidence of Bulgarian atrocities—A French Journalist's report of Bulgarian atrocities—An example of unique cruelty—Aspersions on the Servians refuted—Lord Derby's 'petty local disturbance'—Sir H. Elliot's comparative estimate of human life and British interests—*Nemo repente fuit turpissimus* PAGE 339

CHAPTER IX.

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT.

Divergent policies in Lord Aberdeen's Government—The Prince Consort on the Turks—History repeating itself—Lord Aberdeen's opinion of the Turkish Government—True meaning of the Treaty of Paris—Mr. Gladstone on Treaty of Paris in 1856—Lord Palmerston's explanation—His policy different from Lord Derby's—Mr. Gladstone on the Eastern Question in 1858—Great debate on Danubian Principalities—Lord Robert Cecil supports Mr. Gladstone and is denounced by Mr. Disraeli—The two policies in the light of events—Prince Gortchakoff's despatch on Turkey in 1860—Anglo-French Intervention in Syria in 1861—Autonomy secured for the Lebanon—Wise and loyal conduct of Russia—Cretan insurrection of 1866-7—Austria and all the Powers recommend a Policy of Autonomy—Lord Derby objects, and breaks up the European Concert—Outbreak of last insurrection—Lord Derby's policy depicted in consular-delegations, Andrassy Note, Berlin Memorandum, Constantinople Conference, and General Ignatieff's protocol—Turkish opinion of Lord Derby's policy: 'A drum—skin and wind'—Beneficial results to British interests as well as to humanity from a cordial understanding between England and Russia—How to deal with the Mussulmans of India—Coercion of Turkey means Peace—Lord Derby's Policy means War 415



THE EASTERN QUESTION.

INTRODUCTION.

WE have been often admonished of late by a certain class of our political instructors that it belongs to the essence of a sound English policy to maintain—not for its own sake, but for ours—the territorial integrity and political independence of the Turkish Empire. Though not very old, I have seen so many things swept away without loss which were thought at the time to be a necessary ingredient of British policy, that I shall contemplate without dismay a fresh addition to the already abundant list of political maxims which have, happily, passed from the region of mischievous fallacies into that of obsolete phrases. I am so far from believing that the integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire are necessary to the interests of England, that I hope to prove the converse of that proposition in the course of the following pages. At the same time, I wish we heard somewhat less of ‘the interests of England.’ If respect to its own material interests is to be the guiding motive of English policy to such a degree as to override the claims of humanity and of natural justice, it is obvious that other nations are equally entitled to act

on this rule. Yet those who are most energetic in preaching this doctrine of national selfishness are the very persons who vex the air with their denunciations of Russia for daring to turn to her own advantage the policy which they recommend to England as the *beau ideal* of British statesmanship. In an article on 'Turkish Atrocities and English Duties,' the *Pall Mall Gazette* of August 30 commits itself to the following doctrine :—

‘Was our policy in the East sound and necessary policy, as we believe, and as the Ministry believed it was? If so, it could no more be affected by the massacres at Batak and Panjurischte than by the slaughter of Christians by Mussulmans a thousand years ago. For on what was our Eastern policy founded, as it ought to remain based? Not, certainly, upon any affection for the Turks, or any admiration of the Turkish character. It was always known that the Turks were abominably cruel in war, and corrupt in ways most revolting to Western civilisation. But our policy in the East was not rooted in “love of Turkey” any more than in “hatred of Russia,” and it would be absurd to contend that it should be changed on a sudden because the Turks have shown, in a most hateful way, that they are—now as always—little, if at all, better than savages. Our Eastern policy, as we have conceived it, and as the Government, we trust, have pursued it, is founded on neither likings nor dislikings of creeds and races. Its basis is shaped and established by the conditions of our national existence, and of that irrepressible struggle for empire in which we cannot escape taking part, and which embraces the whole of the Eastern and Western worlds. Are we to shift our ground in a moment from a position which we have deliberately taken up because the Turks have been guilty of loathsome cruelties in Bulgaria? There would

—unless we utterly mistake the temper of the country—be no bounds to the contempt with which a Ministry would be visited that thus set its sails to the gusty sentiment of the passing hour.’

This is the doctrine which the *Pall Mall Gazette* has preached, with great ability and consistency, all through the controversy on the Eastern Question. And I have no doubt that the *Pall Mall Gazette* represents, on this subject, an influential section of educated English opinion. Yet it is hard to believe that any considerable number of Englishmen—and I fear I must add of English women—have realised the hideous immorality of the policy which they advocate. Translated into plain language, it means either that crime ceases to be crime when it subserves the interests of the British Empire, or that the British Government is justified in committing crimes the most monstrous in its ‘irrepressible struggle for empire.’ I say justified in *committing*, for *qui facit per alium facit per se*. In some cases to permit is to commit. But the policy recommended by the *Pall Mall Gazette*—that is, by a powerful section of English society—is not merely a policy of permitting wrong, but of upholding it. The case is this. It is frankly admitted, as a fact ‘always known, that the Turks are abominably cruel in war, and corrupt in ways most revolting to Western civilisation.’ The Bulgarian atrocities therefore, it is argued, ‘brutal beyond conception’ as they were, ought not to have taken us by surprise. Well-informed people always knew that these brutalities ‘beyond conception’ are quite in keeping with the character of the Turk and with the traditions of the Turkish Government. But considerations like these are, it seems, altogether irrelevant. It is of course very unfortunate that the Turk

is such a brute. Nevertheless, brute as he is, England must uphold the integrity and independence of his 'revolting' rule rather than risk any damage in the 'irrepressible struggle for empire.'

But if this doctrine is tenable, where are we to draw the line? It appears to me that, logically considered, the doctrine of the 'irrepressible struggle for empire' forbids us to draw any line at all. If, for the sake of selfish gain, we are bound to uphold a political system of which one of the ordinary characteristics is to indulge in 'brutality beyond conception,' we are clearly justified in indulging in these brutalities ourselves, whenever the alternative is the jeopardy of our interests in the 'irrepressible struggle for empire.' But if England would be justified in defending her interests, in the last resort, by brutalities like those of Batak, why not Turkey? Let it be granted that Midhat Pasha, who planned and ordered the Bulgarian atrocities, believed that he was thereby serving the interests of Turkey, and his conduct is triumphantly vindicated by the political logic of the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

Stripped of all disguise, this is the dismal conclusion in which we are landed by the advocates of British interests at any cost. I, for one, however, refuse to believe that it can ever be the interest of a great nation in the long run to uphold iniquity. But there is no need to discuss that question here, since it can easily be shown that in helping to liberate the Christian subjects of the Porte from their cruel bondage England will at the same time be strengthening the British Empire at the very point where it is supposed to be most vulnerable. There never was a case where philanthropy and policy had better reason for co-operating. This will appear as we proceed. But let us, first of all, endea-

your to take a sort of bird's eye view of the Turkish Empire as it is—its territory, and its various races and religions.

Territorial Divisions of Turkey.

The territorial possessions of Turkey are divided among the three continents of the Old World, and extend over an area of about 30,000 geographical square miles, lying between 48° — 30° north latitude and $13^{\circ} 30'$ — 45° east longitude. This gives a coast line of 1,200 leagues bathed by seven seas: the Adriatic, the Mediterranean, the Archipelago, the Sea of Marmora, the Black Sea, the Red Sea, and the Persian Gulf.

The whole of European Turkey is called by the Turks Roumelia, or the country of the Romans, a name given in the middle ages to the Greeks of the Lower Empire. It is divided into a number of Vilayets or governments-general, as follows:—

1. Adrianople, the ancient Thrace, which came into possession of the Turks in the year 1364, and became their second capital in Europe; the first being Gallipoli, taken in 1357.

2. The Vilayet of the Danube, corresponding to the ancient kingdom of Bulgaria, which was conquered by Sultan Bajazet I. in 1393. It was formed into a Vilayet of the Danube in 1864, having previously consisted of the three Eyalets of Silistria, Vidin, and Nish.

3. The Vilayet of Bosnia, including Bosnia and Turkish Croatia.

4. Herzegovina, which formed part of the Vilayet of Bosnia up to the end of 1875, when it was erected into a separate Vilayet.

5. Salonica.

6. Yanina (Epirus).

7. Monastir.

8. Scutari.

9. Djizaïr (the Isles), comprising all the islands of the Ottoman Archipelago from Samothracia to Rhodes, except Samos and Candia.

10. Crete, or Candia, which received in 1867 a separate constitution, which I believe has proved in practice to be little better than a sham.

Constantinople forms a separate government of itself.

Turkey in Asia comprehends four great divisions. On the West Asia Minor, called by the Turks Anatolia, forms a vast peninsula, equal in extent to France, bounded on the north by the Black Sea, on the west by the Archipelago, on the south by the Mediterranean and part of the chain of the Taurus, and on the east by an imaginary line drawn from Trebizond to the Gulf of Alexandretta. This territory was gradually acquired by the Ottomans between the commencement of the 14th century and the conclusion of the 15th century, during which time they annexed successively the numerous principalities which had arisen on the ruins of the Seldjucidian empire.¹

Turkey in Asia is divided into sixteen Vilayets, of which the following may deserve a passing mention for the sake of old associations:—

Khondâvendkiar; comprising part of Bithynia, Phrygia, and Mysia, and having for its capital Broussa, the ancient Prusium. Conquered in 1326 by the Ottomans, it became their capital and the cradle of their power.

¹ *État Présent de l'Empire Ottoman.* Par MM. A. Ubicini et Pavet de Courteille, p. 12. An excellent manual of reference.

Aidin; formed out of a part of Isauria, Lydia, Ionia, Caria, and Pisidia, and conquered by Mahomed II. in 1426.

Adana (Cilicia Petræa); subject for two centuries to the Turkoman dynasty of the Ramazan Oghli, it fell under the Ottoman yoke under Bajazet II. in 1481.

Konièh (Iconium); containing part of Isauria, Syria, Pamphylia, Silicia, Lycaonia, and Cappadocia. Till within the last few years this district was called Karamania, from Karaman, who obtained possession of it in the middle of the 13th century, and from whose descendants it was wrested in 1475 by Mahomed II.

The Vilayets of Angora and Sivas; formed of the ancient principality of Romhaneddin, which consisted of parts of Galatia and Cappadocia.

Trebizond; formed of the ancient provinces of Pontus and Colchis, and wrested in 1420 from David Comnenus by Mahomed II.

The Eastern division of Asiatic Turkey, comprising Turkish Armenia and Kurdistan, extends to the frontiers of Persia and Russia. Armenia, which fell with the Greek Empire of Trebizond under Ottoman rule, has been formed into the Vilayet of Ezroum. Kurdistan (now formed into the Vilayet of Diarbekir) is a mountainous district, peopled by nomadic and warlike tribes, nominally under the dominion of the Porte, but practically independent till 1837, when they were partially subdued by Hafiz Pasha, and more completely ten years later by the submission of their two Beys.

The third division of Asiatic Turkey is Syria, or Cham as it is called in the East. It extends from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf, and comprehends—with the Lebanon, which was erected in 1864 into a separate government—the Vilayets of Damascus (*i.e.*

Southern Syria, Palestine, and Phœnicia) ; Aleppo (*i.e.* Cœlo-Syria, Northern Syria, and a slice of Mesopotamia) ; Bagdad (*i.e.* Mesopotamia and Assyria, and a portion of the Vilayet of Basra (Irak-Arabia).

The last division of Asiatic Turkey is Arabia, containing the two holy cities of Mecca and Medina, and forming one large government, that of Yemen.

Ottoman Africa comprehends the Vice-royalty of Egypt, subdued by Selim I. in 1517 ; and the ancient regencies of Tripoli and Tunis, which were united to the Ottoman dominions, the former in 1552 under Solyman the Great, the second in 1574 under Selim II.¹

The Turks themselves divide the provinces of the Empire into what they call ‘immediate possessions’ and ‘tributary States.’ In Asia Turkey possesses no tributary States—all its provinces are ‘immediate possessions.’ In Africa, on the other hand, it owns no ‘immediate possessions,’ Egypt, Tripoli, and Tunis being, as we have seen, semi-independent States, acknowledging the suzerainty of the Porte by the payment of tribute and by furnishing a contingent of troops in case of war.

In Europe the possessions of Turkey are of both kinds, ‘immediate’ and ‘tributary.’ The former have been enumerated above. The latter consist of Servia and Roumania, which acknowledge the suzerainty of the Sultan by payment of tribute, but which are not obliged to furnish any troops in defence of Turkey.

Populations of Turkey; Races and Religions.

So much as to the territorial divisions of Turkey. The question of its population is a much harder one to

¹ In this enumeration I have closely followed Ubicini.

answer, owing to the impossibility of obtaining accurate statistics. I will here set down the figures supplied by some of the most recent writers on the question.

The Turkish Minister of Finance in 1866 reckoned the population of the Turkish Empire in round numbers at 42 millions: 18 millions for Europe, 18 millions for Asia, and 6 millions for Africa. Another table of statistics was published by the Turkish Government in 1867, which does not give more than 40 millions for the whole empire, distributed as follows:—

Europe with the Isles (except Cyprus)	18,487,000
Asia with Cyprus	16,463,000
Africa	5,050,000

In both these estimates, however, the tributary States are included, the population of which, according to the last Turkish statement, is 9,300,000, and is distributed as follows:—

Moldo-Wallachia	4,000,000
Servia	1,000,000
Egypt	3,350,000
Tunis (with Tripoli)	950,000

This reduces the population of Turkey Proper to 30,700,000:—

In Europe	13,487,000
In Asia	16,463,000
In Africa	750,000

Ubicini, however, points out that these figures cannot be depended upon. Roumania, for example, which the Turkish estimate of 1867 puts down at 4,000,000, had in 1861 a population of 4,424,961; and Servia, which is put down at 1,000,000 in 1867, had 1,215,961 in 1866. Ubicini's own estimate is as follows:—

Vilayets.	Mussulmans.	Non-Mussulmans.	Total.
Adrianople	603,110	991,076	1,594,186
Danube	1,055,650	1,535,466	2,591,116
Bosnia and Herzegovina }	619,044	613,414	1,232,458
Salonica	249,656	248,314	497,970
Yanina	501,498	935,202	1,436,700
Monastir	795,986	611,610	1,407,596
Scutari	176,000	224,000	400,000
Constantinople	620,000	580,000	1,200,000
Candia	93,112	118,888	212,000
Archipelago	114,360	305,640	420,000
	<u>4,828,416</u>	<u>6,163,610</u>	<u>10,992,026</u>

The population of the whole Turkish Empire, according to MM. Ubicini and Courteille, does not exceed $28\frac{1}{2}$ millions, not including the tributary States. Of these $28\frac{1}{2}$ millions, according to our authors, about $13\frac{1}{2}$ millions belong to the conquering or Ottoman race; the rest representing an agglomeration of peoples of divers origin and languages, which may be divided ethnographically into seven principal groups, as follows :—

1. The Turkish group (comprehending under that designation Ottomans, Turkomans, and Tartars) gives a population of 14,020,000.

2. The Greco-Latin (comprising Greeks proper, Tzintzares, and Albanians) gives a population of 3,520,000.

3. The Slave (comprising Serbo-Croats, Bulgarians, Kosacks, and Lipovans) gives a population of 4,550,000.

4. The Georgian (comprising Circassians and Lazes) number 1,020,000.

5. The Hindu group, or Gypsies, numbering 212,000.

6. The Persian (comprising Armenians, Kurds, Druses, &c.) number 3,620,000.

7. The Semitic group (comprising Jews, Arabs, Chaldees, Syro-Maronites) number 1,611,000.

This gives a total of 28,533,000, of which 18,578,000 are Sunnite Mussulmans and 360,000 belong to various

non-Christian sects. The remaining 9,615,000 are distributed as follows:—The Greco-Russian Church absorbs 3,225,000; the Bulgarians 2,920,000; the Armenians 2,450,000; Chaldean Nestorians 130,000; Syrian Jacobites 65,000. Of Roman Catholics, including the Maronites, the Melkites, and all other Uniats, our authors reckon 670,000. There are about 5,000 Protestants in all Turkey, and about 150,000 Jews. This gives 9,465,000 Christians as against 18,938,000 Mussulmans and Pagans,¹ and 150,000 Jews.

Thus far the calculation of Ubicini as to the population, races, and religion of the entire Turkish Empire. The present inquiry, however, is chiefly concerned with the European provinces of Turkey. Let us therefore compare Ubicini's statistics with those of other independent inquirers. Ubicini, as we have seen, reckons the population of European Turkey, exclusive of the vassal States, at 10,992,026, of which he gives 4,828,416 to the Mussulmans, and 6,163,610 to the non-Mussulmans.

M. Emile de Girardin, on the other hand, in a recently published work² which gives evidence of careful research, reckons the Christians of European Turkey at 8,660,000, and the Mussulmans at 1,200,000, excluding of course the tributary provinces. I assume,

¹ Ubicini includes 240,000 Gypsies and a considerable number of other non-Christian sectaries in his estimate of the Mussulman population of Turkey. His exhaustive division groups all the populations under the three heads of Mussulmans, Christians, and Israelites. But, as a basis for political speculation, this is an entirely misleading division. The Mussulman group is not a compact mass united by the bonds of national unity. There is no *solidarité*, but only a very attenuated cohesion, between large masses of its constituent elements.

² *La Honte de l'Europe*, p. 28.

though he does not say so, that he leaves out of this estimate both Jews and Gypsies, which together probably reach the figure of about 250,000. As regards the whole population, this estimate falls short of Ubicini's to the extent of 882,000. But the discrepancy as to religion is much more startling; Ubicini's estimate of the Mussulmans being 3,622,416 in excess of Girardin's, and of the Christians 2,496,390 less. This is tolerably puzzling, and the uncertainty increases as we extend our researches. Perthes, in his annual abstract of the population of the world, reckons the European population of Turkey at 8,000,000, and its Asiatic population at 13,500,000. Of the former three-fourths are assigned to Christianity and the remaining fourth to Islam, all the non-Christian element being, I suppose, included under that designation.

Bianconi¹ estimates the population of Asiatic Turkey at 12,000,000, and of European Turkey, not including Roumania and Servia, at 19,000,000, in round numbers, viz. :—

Bulgaria	.	.	.	.	8,000,000
Roumelia	.	.	.	.	4,000,000
Herzegovina and Bosnia	.	.	.	.	2,500,000
Macedonia and Thessaly	.	.	.	.	2,000,000
Albania	.	.	.	.	1,500,000
Turkish Servia	.	.	.	.	500,000
Miridites	.	.	.	.	100,000
Nomad Gypsies	.	.	.	.	200,000
Total					18,800,000

¹ *La Question d'Orient Dévoilée, ou La Vérité sur la Turquie.* Par F. Bianconi, Ex-Ingénieur, Architecte en chef des Études de Chemins de Fer de la Roumélie, Bulgairie et Bosnie. Paris, 1876.

To prevent misapprehension, it may be as well to add that M. Bianconi is a Frenchman and a Roman Catholic.

This population, with the addition of 800,000 Jews, he divides according to races and religions as follows :—

10,000,000 Slaves, of whom 9,000,000 are assigned to the Orthodox Greek Church, and 1,000,000 to the Roman Catholics.

4,000,000 of indigenous Greeks belonging to the Orthodox Church.

4,100,000 Mussulmans.

800,000 Jews.

200,000 Gypsies without any known religion.

100,000 Miridites, nominally Roman Catholics, but in fact semi-savage mountaineers.

This calculation is evidently too high all round, except perhaps in the case of the Gypsies.

Mr. Farley, who knows Turkey as well as most men, gives the following statistics, in his work on 'Turks and Christians':—

Ottomans	.	.	.	.	1,150,000
Slaves	.	.	.	.	7,200,000
Greeks	.	.	.	.	1,450,000
Albanians	.	.	.	.	1,500,000
Roumanians	.	.	.	.	4,000,000
Armenians	.	.	.	.	400,000
Jews	.	.	.	.	70,000
Tartars	.	.	.	.	16,000
Gypsies	.	.	.	.	214,000
Total					<u>16,000,000</u>

while, according to religious profession, there are, according to Mr. Farley :—

Mussulmans	.	.	.	3,200,000
Greeks and Armenians	.	.	.	11,600,000
Roman Catholics	.	.	.	890,000
Other sects	.	.	.	240,000
Total				<u>16,000,000</u>

Mr. Denton puts the non-Turkish races of Turkey at 11,583,700, and the Turks at 1,260,000. While as to religion he gives the Christians at 10,673,700, and

the Mussulmans at 2,200,000. This calculation does not include Roumania, to which Mr. Denton gives a population of 4,500,000, or Servia, with a population of 1,340,000.¹

Sir George Campbell reckons the population of European Turkey, excluding the tributary States, at 8,000,000 or 9,000,000, and thinks that, 'including Constantinople, it is probably more.' The non-Mahomedans he puts at 3,500,000, and the Christians at 5,500,000. Bulgaria, however, is the only province which he professes to have investigated in person, and there he thinks that the population is more than 5,000,000. But the Bulgarian delegates, Messrs. Zancoff and Balabanow,² assert that the Bulgarian Christians alone amount to 5,000,000, the remainder of the population consisting of 450,000 Pomaks and 350,000 Turks. This would raise the population of Bulgaria to 5,800,000, an estimate which, for reasons stated hereafter, I believe to be not far from the truth. There would remain, therefore, only from 3,000,000 to 4,000,000 to all the rest of European Turkey outside the vassal States, if we are to reckon the whole population at from 8,000,000 to 9,000,000. But this would clearly be far below the mark, and the inevitable conclusion is that the whole population is much larger than Sir George Campbell puts it. He gives the Greeks over 2,000,000 in all. The Christian Albanians, Bosnians, and Koutzo-Wallachs and the Armenians settled in Europe, together with the Jews and other races and sects, he puts down at 2,000,000 more. This is far too low an estimate. The Mussulmans in Europe he reckons at 3,200,000 of which he gives 2,000,000 to the Turks, 500,000 being assigned to Constantinople alone. This calcula-

¹ Christians in Turkey, pp. 32-3.

² Bulgaria, pp. 7-8.

tion does a great deal more than justice to the Turks. Let us test it by Constantinople alone. Petermann and Lejean, who are standard authorities, give an estimate of the Turk and Rayah population of Constantinople and its environs, including both shores of the Bosphorus, based on statistics which were verified in 1856, and the result is 353,600 Turks against 246,000 Rayahs.¹ The relative numbers have, of course, varied during the last twenty years; but this variation has certainly not been in favour of the Turk. Sir George himself is of opinion that 2,000,000 is too high an estimate of the Turks in Europe. Mr. Denton puts them down at about 1,260,000, and I am disposed to think that even this is a liberal allowance.

It is to be hoped that the reader is now in a position to appreciate the difficulty of supplying him with trustworthy statistics as to the numbers, races, and religions of the European population of Turkey. I believe, however, that an approximate estimate of tolerable accuracy may be arrived at, and in the following way:—Instead of trusting to Turkish officials, let us take any writers of note who have made a special study of particular provinces, and we shall find, if I mistake not, that the Christians of Turkey in Europe are more numerous than they are supposed to be, and the Turks less so. We have seen already that Sir George Campbell reckons the Christian population of Bulgaria as probably over 5,000,000. I have no doubt that a personal inquiry in other provinces would yield him a similar result. But let us question other authorities.

And first as to Bulgaria. Sir George Campbell's estimate of the population of Bulgaria is corroborated

¹ *Ethnographie der Europäischen Türkei*. Von D. A. Petermann und G. Lejean, pp. 34–5.

by the independent testimony of the two Bulgarian delegates who have lately been visiting the capitals of Europe. They put down, as we have seen, the Christian population at 5000,000, and the Mussulmans at 800,000. This gives a maximum of 5,800,000. But of these Mussulmans there are only 350,000 Turks, who are chiefly to be found in garrison towns. The rest of the Bulgarian Mussulmans, who are known by the name of Pomaks, are the descendants of Christians, chiefly of the upper class, who, on the conquest of their country by the Turks, embraced Islam in the hope of retaining their privileges and escaping the degradation and cruelties which have ever been the lot of the Christian subjects of Turkey. These Pomaks are described by the Bulgarian delegates as 'true Bulgarians, having preserved the customs and even the names of their nation. The greater part of them do not even know a single word of Turkish, and were it not for the Mohammedan authorities, who excite their religious fanaticism, they would ever live in perfect harmony with their Christian fellow-countrymen.'

Kanitz, in his elaborate work on Bulgaria, concludes, from inquiries made by him in the province itself, that the entire Bulgarian nation consists of about 6,030,000, consisting of 5,670,000 members of the Orthodox Greek Church, 300,000 Mussulman Slaves, and 60,000 Roman Catholics.¹ In this enumeration, however, Kanitz includes not only Bulgarians resident in Old Servia, but also those resident in Roumania and the Crimea.

¹ Donau-Bulgarien und der Balkan: Historisch-geographisch-ethnographisch Reisestudien aus den Jahren 1860-1875. p. 141.

On the whole, then, we shall probably be not far from the truth if we say that the Slave population of Bulgaria, embracing both sides of the Balkans, is somewhere about 6,000,000, of whom about 450,000 are Mussulmans, the Turkish element adding about 350,000 more.

Let us next take Bosnia and Herzegovina. A very careful and full account of these provinces was published in 1868 by Major Roskiewicz, an officer on the General Staff of the Austrian army. According to him there are hardly any resident Turks, and the Mussulmans altogether amount to 383,000, including 323,000 Arnouts dwelling in the district of Novibazar, and 6,000 in Herzegovina. 'The Arnouts,' says Roskiewicz, 'living in the district of Novibazar among the Greeks, are related to the Albanian stock, and have adopted the Albanian language and costume.' The members of the Orthodox Church are by far the largest factor in the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina, amounting in the former to 460,000, and in the latter to 75,000—in all, 535,000. The Roman Catholics of Bosnia number 135,000, occupying 19,000 houses. Those of Herzegovina number 47,180—in all, 182,180. Add to this about 5,200 Jews in Bosnia, and 500 in Herzegovina, and the result is 717,180 Christians, as against 383,000 Mohammedans and 5,700 Jews.¹

In Bosnia and the Herzegovina, therefore, as in Bulgaria, we see that the number of the Christian population is increased, while that of the Mussulmans is diminished, in proportion to the accuracy of the statistics. It is so also in Roumania and Servia, as we have already seen, and we may safely assume therefore,

¹ Studien über Bosnien und die Herzegovina. Von Johann Roskiewicz, K.K. Major im Generalstabe, pp. 78–82.

without further inquiry, that if German scholars should make a special study of the other provinces of European Turkey, a similar result would be apparent.

For this discrepancy between facts and statistics there are two reasons. In the first place, the Ottoman Government sees with serious apprehension the rapid diminution of the Osmanlis and the steady increase of the Christians, in spite of all attempts, by massacre and otherwise, to keep them down; and it does its best accordingly to conceal the fact from Christian Europe, from the Rayahs themselves, and from the ruling caste, by means of false statistics. The Gypsies, for example, who number, according to Ubicini, about 212,000, are grouped with the Mussulmans in the official statistics of the Porte. So are also the Armenians, of whom there are upwards of 400,000 in Europe, and of these, 200,000 in Constantinople alone, chiefly in the quarters of Eyoub, Psammattia, Koum-Kapou, Galata, and Balad.¹ The politicians of Europe in general do not take the trouble, and have seldom the means, of testing the accuracy of Turkish statistics, and it is thus easy for the Porte to palm off upon Europe a much larger Mussulman and a much smaller Christian population than the facts really warrant. And the Christians themselves, it must be added, help, for reasons of their own, to propagate the deception. Nearly all the Christian communities in European Turkey have a kind of voluntary municipal organization of their own (of which more anon) quite apart from Turkish officialism. In the various villages and towns the Christians elect annually from among themselves a certain number of headmen, who are charged with the duty of administering the affairs of the community, including

¹ Lejean and Petermann, p. 37.

justice in the case of disputes of Christians with each other ; for it is a rare thing for a Christian to appeal to a Turkish tribunal against one of his own faith. In the villages these headmen are generally called Primates. In the towns they are usually called Ephori. Their functions are entirely voluntary, and their services gratuitous. One of their number is generally chosen to preside over the rest, and he acts as intermediary between the community and the authority, whether that of the bishop or of the governor of the district. The ecclesiastical head of the Greeks is the Patriarch of Constantinople, who is always appointed by the Porte on payment of a large simoniacal bribe. It follows, of course, that fitness for his post is the last qualification to be looked for in the Patriarch of Constantinople. The Porte selects the man who offers the largest bribe, and who is likely at the same time to prove a pliant creature of Ottoman policy. If the accepted candidate has not means enough, as he seldom has, to pay the bribe, he borrows at exorbitant interest from a money-lender. Once installed in his office, he wields supreme power over the Christian community committed by the Vicar of Mahomet to his trust, and the myrmidons of Turkish tyranny are henceforth at his beck to fleece his flock. His first thought is to reimburse himself to the full amount of his bribe ; a large sum, for in addition to the baksheesh which the Sultan receives, the Grand Vizier has to be bribed, and all the persons by whom the Grand Vizier can be influenced. The Patriarch's next consideration is how to squeeze as large a revenue as possible for himself out of the hard earnings of his Christian subjects. This he does through the bishops who, in order to meet the exactions of their chief, are compelled to act the part of leeches towards their priests ; and the

latter are thus forced to prey upon their flocks. Yet speakers and writers innumerable cite the rapacity and degradation of the Eastern bishops and clergy as a convincing proof that Slaves and Greeks are alike unfit for self-government; the corollary being that the paternal rule of the Porte is necessary to keep the Christians from devouring each other! In other words, the inevitable results of an atrocious policy are brought forward to prove that the policy is necessary as a check on the results!

The wonder truly is that under such a system the clergy of the Greek Church are no worse than they are. There are many excellent, intelligent, and highly educated men among them, and they all groan under a system which they feel to be as degrading as it is tyrannous, but which, thanks to the supposed necessity of maintaining 'the integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire,' they are unable to shake off. The Bulgarian clergy and laity have lately (A.D. 1872) shaken it off in part by repudiating the authority of the Patriarch of Constantinople, who retaliated by an edict of excommunication. Into the merits of the quarrel I do not intend to enter in this place. Let it suffice to say that the Bulgarians are now governed ecclesiastically by an Exarch elected by the clergy, approved by the Porte, and resident in Constantinople.

The Porte conceded this privilege to the Bulgarians on the principle of *divide et impera*—a principle which it has applied assiduously to its Christian subjects; and its cloven foot peeped out through the drapery of diplomatic phraseology in which its real intentions were shrouded. In strict harmony with the ordinary rules the Bulgarian clergy elected for their first Exarch Hilarion, the intrepid bishop who, in his church at

Constantinople, had first proclaimed the independence of the Bulgarian Church. The two last qualities, however, which the Porte admires in a bishop are intrepidity and independence. An intrepid and patriotic Exarch would never do, and so the Bulgarian clergy were told in mellifluous phrases—for it would be imprudent to drive them back into the arms of the Greek Patriarch—that the appointment of Hilarion would make the breach with the Patriarchate irreparable—the very thing which the Porte, but not the Bulgarians, wished. The election of Hilarion was accordingly set aside, and Anthimos, Metropolitan of Vidin, was chosen in his stead. The latter had borne the reputation of a grasping disposition, and the Porte fancied that he would prove a pliant tool. That he has not done so is a proof that the clergy of the Eastern Church will rise to the responsibility and dignity of their position in proportion as they are released from the debasing yoke of Turkish misrule.

This digression was necessary to explain the reason why the Christians, from a very different motive, aid the Porte in propagating a false impression as to their real numbers.

Among the duties of the Kodja-Bachi,¹ or president of the Christian council described above, is that of drawing up annually a report of the births and deaths which take place within his jurisdiction. This he sends to the bishop, who forwards it to the Patriarch at Constantinople. On these reports are based the oppressive exactions of both Porte and Patriarch. The more numerous the births in a town or village, the heavier is the contribution which it is obliged to send to Constantinople. A powerful inducement is thus held out

¹ I have followed Ubicini in the orthography of this word. It is spelt differently by other writers.

for the concealment, as much as possible, of the growth of the Christian population.

Taking these two facts together—the systematic falsification of statistics both by the Porte and by its Christian subjects—we are certainly justified in putting the Christians at a much higher, and the Mussulmans—especially the Turks—at a much lower figure than the ordinary statistics. On the whole, I believe the following estimate of the relative proportions of the Christian and Mussulman subjects of the Porte in Europe is not far from the truth. With regard to the Slave population of Turkey, I accept the figures of the well-informed Servian politician who has lately contributed two able and interesting articles on the Eastern Question to *Macmillan's Magazine*. He estimates the Slave population at 9,000,000, of whom, however, 700,000 are Mussulmans, the rest being Christians—that is 8,000,000 belonging to the Eastern Church, and 300,000, at the most, to the Roman Catholics. At present I draw no distinction between Orthodox and Roman Catholics, but reckon together all the Christians on the one hand and all the Mussulmans on the other, as follows:—

<i>Christians.</i>			
Slaves	.	.	8,000,000
Roumanians	.	.	4,500,000
Greeks and Albanians	.	.	2,200,000
Armenians and Georgians	.	.	0,420,000
Wallachs outside Roumania	.	.	0,220,000
Total			15,340,000

<i>Mussulmans.</i>			
Turks	.	.	1,500,000
Slaves	.	.	700,000
Other Mussulmans	.	.	500,000
Total			2,700,000

I believe that this estimate does ample justice to the Mussulmans, and less than justice to the Christians. I leave the Jews and Gypsies out of the calculation because they are outside the sphere of national aspirations. We have, therefore, before us the case of 15,340,000 Christians ruled over by a population of 2,700,000 Mussulmans vastly inferior to themselves in intelligence, in education, in virtue, and, in short, in all that constitutes capacity and aptitude for the various duties of social and political life.¹

But in order to put the anomaly at its real value we ought to subtract the Slave Mussulmans from our calculation. There is the widest possible difference between these and the Turks, whom, indeed, they regard with feelings of invincible contempt. They are mostly descended, as we have already seen, from Christian forefathers who apostatised to escape the mournful doom of the Rayah. But they have never forgotten their Christian ancestry; and in many a Mussulman household among the valleys of Bosnia and on the slopes of the Balkans are fondly cherished traditions and memorials of the faith which their forefathers bartered in exchange for the rights of freemen. Some of these heirlooms, presented to Bishop Strossmayer by Mussulman friends in Bosnia, I saw in his

¹ Vice-Consul Maling in a report on the condition of the Christians in Turkey, addressed to Lord Stanley in 1867, explains as follows the total denial of justice to the Christians:— 'That this system should receive the support of conscientious Mussulmans, as it does, can only be explained by concluding that they regard it as a necessary defence against the Christian, whose immeasurable superiority in intellect, education, and aptitude for industrial and all other pursuits would beat the Turk out of the field altogether but for the arms which the executive and tribunals put into his hands.'

palace at Diakovar last September. They are interesting specimens of the progress of the arts in Bosnia before the Turk came in to blight it all. The Mussulmans of Bosnia have no antipathy to Christianity as such. Some of them have near relations on the Austrian side of the Save with whom they keep up a regular intercourse, including an occasional exchange of visits. In some of the Mussulman households, too, the feasts of the patron saints of the family in the old Christian days—S. Peter, S. Elias, S. George—are still observed; and it is said that it is not rare for a Mussulman father to order mass to be said for his sick child, nor for a young Bey to get a Christian priest to pray at the grave of his deceased parents.

The Slave Mussulmans are fanatical, no doubt, but it is the fanaticism of caste rather than of religion. Of Islam, in its theological and religious aspect, they know little and care less. As a rule, they do not understand Turkish, and the Koran is a sealed book to them, except such knowledge as they pick up of its contents at second hand. It is but rarely that they practise polygamy, and their women are at liberty, whenever they choose to avail themselves of it, to go abroad without the customary veil. This has given rise to the Turkish proverb: 'Go to Bosnia if you would fall in love with your bride.' Let the Slave Mussulmans of Bosnia and Bulgaria be convinced that the abolition of the Turkish rule does not mean the abolition of their hereditary rights, and they will view the exit of the Ottomans not with equanimity merely but with warm approval. The rule of the Turk has never been popular with the Mussulman Slaves, and they have more than once risen up in arms against it. In the last revolt of the Beys of Bosnia they solicited the co-

operation of their Christian brethren to shake off the yoke of the common enemy of both; but the Machiavellian craft of the Porte frustrated the combination, and the Christians, deluded by a budget of false promises, enabled Omar Pasha to put the Mussulman insurgents down. Hence the animosity with which the latter have turned upon the Christians in the recent insurrection. It is an animosity fanned by the *lex talionis* and the jealousy of caste, and not to any appreciable degree by religious zeal; and it is carefully cultivated by the crafty Turks, who, not satisfied with falsifying the liberal promises which they made to the Christians through Omar Pasha, took away from them the few privileges which they had previously enjoyed, and placed them completely at the mercy of the Mussulman proprietors, now exasperated against them for siding with Omar Pasha. The Porte has thus contrived to cause a bitter feud between the Mussulman and Christian Slaves of Bosnia, which it will take some time to heal. But the time need not be a long one, if Turkish officialism, the root of all the mischief, is removed. The Mussulman landowners of Bosnia are a fine and generous body of men; brave, high-spirited, and resentful against wrong; but truthful, honest, and never, like the Turk, cruel in their vengeance. Such is the character given to them by Bishop Strossmayer, who knows them well, having often been a welcome guest at their houses. He thinks that if they were only rid of the demoralising influence of the Government at Constantinople, they would not only soon learn to live in peace with their Christian neighbours, but even gradually—he believes in about fifty years—return to the religion of their forefathers.

The Slave Mussulmans of the Empire, therefore,

are evidently not a force upon which the Porte can permanently rely, and they may fairly be debited to the Christian rather than to the Turkish side of our reckoning.¹ We shall then have, on the most liberal allowance, 2,000,000 of ignorant, unprogressive Turks (including Turkomans and Circassians), with a government essentially barbarous and irretrievably corrupt, tyrannising over a subject population of some 16,000,000 of superior races, who need only one thing to make them prosperous and happy—the precious gift of freedom.

But merely to say that the inestimable blessing of freedom is denied to the Christian subjects of the Porte is to convey a very inadequate idea of their miserable condition. If we would understand the intolerable wretchedness of their lot we must follow out the practical working of the Ottoman system of government as it affects the ordinary life of the oppressed Rayah. This I have done through piles of Blue Books and other sources of information. I have read with great care all the Parliamentary Papers published in England during the last twenty years on the condition of the

¹ I have come across the following strong confirmation of this opinion since these words were written:—‘I hope,’ remarked Mr. Nassau Senior, in the course of conversation with Mr. Consul Blunt, ‘that the Mussulmans and Christians may be so far fused, by the enjoyment of equal rights, as to be loyal subjects to one Government.’ ‘I hope so, too,’ he answered; ‘but in the parts of Bulgaria which I know best, that is, Macedonia and Thessaly, it will not be the Government of the Sultan. The Mussulmans of these countries are as disaffected to the Constantinopolitan Government as the Christians are. They have a hundred times said to me, “When will you drive those hogs out of Constantinople?”’—*Nassau Senior’s Journal, kept in Turkey and Greece*, p. 191.

Christian subjects of the Porte. They consist partly of ambassadors' despatches, but chiefly of consular reports. I have also read works written by foreigners—English, French, German, Italian, American—not casual travellers, except in two cases, but men who resided for years in the districts which they describe, and who relate in calm and moderate language the result of their own experience. They belong, moreover, to different religions, and to none: Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran, Irish and American Protestants, Jews, Agnostics. They write quite independently of each other, from different motives, and with different aims; but they all tell the same harrowing tale of brutal oppression on the part of the ruling race, and intolerable wrongs, endured without possibility or hope of redress, by the ruled. It is of course impossible to convey to the reader's mind the impression made upon my own by the mass of facts which I have collected and sifted; but I think I can produce evidence enough to convince him that the Christian subjects of Turkey are absolutely without security for any of the elementary rights of humanity whether in person or property. They are in fact outlaws in their own land, for they cannot call anything, not even life itself, their own. They are entirely and in every respect at the mercy of their oppressors. This is a dreadful accusation against a government in defence of whose integrity and independence England has spent enormous treasures and lavished the blood of thousands of her bravest sons. Whether it is more dreadful than the facts fully justify the reader shall now have an opportunity of judging for himself.

CHAPTER I.

THE RAYAHS OF TURKEY.

THE four primary conditions of happiness for civilised beings are :—

1. Security for life.
2. Security for honour.
3. Security for religious liberty.
4. Security for property.

The Christian subjects of Turkey have no security for any of the four. They are literally outlaws in their own land, and may be wronged to any extent with impunity. That this is no exaggeration will be perceived when I add that their evidence is never received against a Mussulman except in some isolated cases, easily accounted for, and so few that they do not affect the general statement. But to debar a man from giving evidence before the law, either as prosecutor or defendant, is clearly to make an outlaw of him. For an outlaw is defined as ‘a person excluded from the benefit of the law, or deprived of its protection.’ This is an exact description of the Christian subject of Turkey. The exclusion of Christian evidence places him, without the slightest redress as far as the law is concerned, at the mercy of the first Mussulman who assails him in his person, his honour, his religion, or his property. And the prohibition to bear arms deprives him at the

same time of what Burke calls ‘the first fundamental right of uncovenanted man,’ ‘the right of self-defence, the first law of nature.’¹ Let him be the victim of ever so monstrous a crime—the murder of his dearest relation, the maiming of his person, the rape of wife or daughter: where shall he look for redress? Shall he appeal to the law and invoke the arm of justice against the offender? Very good. The crime was committed in the presence of scores of spectators. But the Mussulmans refuse to give evidence against a True Believer in favour of the despised and hated Giaour; and the evidence of the Christians is rejected, though guaranteed in magnificent phrases by innumerable Hatts and Firmans. The complaint of the Christian is therefore summarily rejected, and he may deem himself lucky if he escape the bastinado for having made a false charge against a Mussulman.

When the judge knows that the accused Mussulman is prepared with false witnesses, he may possibly admit Christian evidence; and then the result is thus related in the Blue Books:—

‘If it be proved that a Turk slew a Christian at a certain place on a certain day, he will find witnesses who will prove that on the said day he was at another place at any distance from that where the crime was committed, and they will confirm their evidence by an oath on the Kitab [Koran]. Then the scene suddenly changes, and severe penalties are incurred by the Giaour calumniators who have dared to profane the sanctuary of the courts with base lies and aspersions to the injury of an innocent Mussulman. Then the remarks and the just anger of the Cadi and Medjlis echo throughout the

¹ Works, vol. iv. p. 199. (*Reflections on the Revolution in France.*)

city, and those poor fellows are at once thrown manacled into prison, fined, and rendered infamous for ever.' (Parl. Papers of 1876, No. ii. p. 38.)

This statement may be illustrated by the following case related in MacFarlane's 'Destiny of Turkey,' vol. i. pp. 336-38. I am indebted for the quotation to Mr. Denton's 'Christians of Turkey,' p. 103. The incident took place after the Hatti-humayoun which abolished torture—on paper :—

'During the late Ramazan Hadji Dhimitri, of Ascìa-keui, a picturesque village in the ravine, situated among high rocks, which we had seen on our right hand in coming up from Keuplu to Billijik, had been miserably crippled and otherwise injured by order of the Turkish court, which had let off Abdullah Effendi without so much as a reprimand. Turks as well as Greeks lived at Ascìa-keui. One day poor Hadji Dhimitri had with great toil brought up water from a fountain, and had filled his reservoir in order to irrigate his little garden and mulberry ground. A Turk, his neighbour, one Kara-Ali, came to him and said that he wanted that water for his own garden, and must have it. The Greek said that he might have brought up water for himself, but that he was free to take part of it. The Turk got into a towering passion, called the Greek a Giaour and pezavenk, and swore he would have all the water. The quarrel was hot, but short. Dhimitri, fearing consequences if he resisted, went away and left the Turk to take and wantonly waste the water, merely saying that he submitted to violence and injustice, and that the Tanzimaut meant nothing. The Turkish savage went to the Mudir and Kadi at Billijik, and vowed that Hadji Dhimitri had wanted to rob him of his water, and had uttered horrible blasphemies against the Koran and the

Prophet. Tufekjees were sent to Ascià-keui, and Hadji Dhimitri, being first of all soundly beaten, was handcuffed and chained and brought up to Billijik. The Greeks of the village were afraid of appearing in such a case against a Mussulman ; but four or five did follow the unfortunate Hadji to the hall, misnamed of justice, and were there to depose that it was the Turk who had taken by violence his water and had traduced his religion ; and that he, the Hadji, though excited by anger, had not said a word against the Koran or the Prophet. But the testimony of these Christians could not be taken against Mussulman witnesses, and Kara-Ali, the Turk, was provided with two false witnesses, one being Shakir Bey, his son-in-law, and the other Otuz-Bir-Oglou-Achmet-Bey. The pair were false witnesses of notoriety, and generally reputed to be the two greatest scoundrels of the town. There were scores upon scores of people who had seen them at the coffee-house in Billijik at the hour and time they pretended to have been at Ascià-keui, four miles off. But of those who had thus seen them the Mussulmans would not appear, and the Christians could not get their evidence received in court. Kara-Ali swore to the truth of his statement ; his two false witnesses swore that they had heard the Greek blaspheme their holy religion, and by sentence of the Kadi poor Hadji Dhimitri received, then and there, 300 strokes of the bastinado. His toes were broken by the blows, his feet were beaten to a horrible jelly, he screamed and fainted under the torture. There were some among our narrators who had seen this forbidden torture inflicted, and others who had heard the poor man's shrieks. The victim was carried home on the back of an ass ; he had been laid prostrate for more than six weeks ; it was only the day before our arrival

that he had been able to attend the Billjik market, and then he was lame and sick—a hobbling, crippled, broken man. “The law,” said one of our party, “is equal in the two cases. If Hadji Dhimitri were guilty, he was only guilty of that which we have all heard from the lips of Abdallah Effendi this morning in the khan ; yet the Hadji is cruelly bastinadoed and lamed for life, and this same Kadi does not even reprimand the Effendi. What then is the use of this Tanzimaut ?” “The use of it,” said Tchelebee John, “is just this ; it throws dust in the eyes of the foreign ambassadors at Constantinople who recommended its promulgation, and it humbugs half the nations of Christendom, where people believe in newspaper reports.”

This may appear to some—not unnaturally I admit—so monstrous a state of things in any country professing to be civilised that they may reasonably refuse to believe it on any ground short of the most positive and irrefutable evidence. That evidence I now proceed to lay before the reader in sufficient abundance, I believe, to satisfy all whose minds are open to conviction. It is a fair sample out of a large mass of facts in my possession ; and the first witnesses whom I shall put into the Box are Her Majesty’s Consuls.

Instructed by the Government at home, Her Majesty’s Ambassador at Constantinople, Sir Henry Bulwer, addressed a series of questions to the British Consuls throughout Turkey on the condition of the Christians in that empire. This was in the summer of 1860, and the Reports of the Consuls, together with the list of questions which elicited them, were published in 1861, and presented to ‘both Houses of Parliament by command of Her Majesty.’

Among the questions asked was the following:—

‘Is Christian evidence admitted in Courts of Justice? and if not, point out the cases where it has been refused.’¹

Observe the sophism which lurks in the adroit form in which this question is worded. It might be answered with perfect truth that Christian evidence was hardly ever refused in Turkish Courts of Justice; and one or two of the Consuls fell into the trap and gave the sort of answer which the question so clearly suggested. Yet an answer of this kind would be an entire perversion of the truth; and the Consul whose report is first on the list, Consul Abbott, detected the fallacy and exposed it within the short compass of four lines of print. His answer is as follows :—

‘It is admitted at the Tahkik Medjlis (Court of Inquiry). There Christian witnesses are sworn, whereas Mussulmans are not. I cannot point out cases where it has been refused at the other Courts, *as, it being considered an established rule not to admit Christian evidence, a Christian has never dared present in a suit one of his co-religionists to give his testimony.*’²

Thus we see that a Christian’s evidence is not admitted at all except in the preliminary Court of Inquiry; and even there, let me add, it is only admitted when a foreign Consul happens to be in the place. Moreover, the Christian is put upon his oath, and the Mussulman is not. This is a sample of the way in which a perfectly truthful, yet an entirely false, account may be given by casual travellers of the real condition of things in Turkey. The traveller has an introduction to some official, who takes him to see a trial going on in a Tahkik Medjlis. He sees the Christian and the Turk each producing his witnesses; and, not understanding

¹ P. 3.² P. 6.

Turkish, he is not aware that the Christian is sworn while the Turk is not. The Turk gets one or more of the group of Mussulmans who hang about the Courts to sell their evidence to the highest bidder of their own faith, and the judge decides in his favour. The Christian cannot appeal; for his evidence is not received at all in the superior Courts. If the judge sees that a Frank is present, he will probably decide in favour of the Christian, in order to make an exhibition of his fairness. But the latter is in no better plight for that, because the Turk will appeal to a Court where the Christian, from his disability in the matter of evidence, has no *locus standi*. The traveller comes home and writes an indignant letter to the newspapers, denouncing the scandalous libels propagated against these honest and truthful Turks; for did he not see with his own eyes a Christian's evidence received in Court, and on the strength of that evidence the case decided in his favour? I have read a good deal of this sort of thing during the past six months.

Lest, however, the experience of Consul Abbott should be considered singular, it may be well to support it with some additional testimony. Consul Abbott's Report is dated from Monastir.

Consul Finn,¹ writing from Jerusalem, answers as follows:—

‘In the Mehkemeh or Cadi's Court non-Mussulman evidence is always refused. In the various Medj-lises some subterfuge is always sought for declining to receive non-Mussulman evidence against a Mussulman, or recording it under the technical name of witness. These Courts and the Pashas will rather condemn at once a Mussulman in favour of a Christian

¹ P. 27.

without recording testimony, than accept non-Mussulman evidence. Evidence of Christian against Christian or Jew, or *vice versâ*, i.e., non-Moslem against non-Moslem, is always received.'

Vice-Consul Blunt,¹ writing from Pristina, says :—

'Christian evidence in lawsuits between a Mussulman and a non-Mussulman is not admitted in the Local Courts.'

'It is not admitted,'² says Consul Skene, writing from Aleppo; 'and the attempt is never made to obtain its admission.'

'In cases between Christians, yes,' says Major Cox from Bulgaria; 'but in cases between Christians and Mahometans, no.'³

So far the testimony of her Majesty's Consuls in 1860. Let us take a leap of seven years, and see whether there is any improvement. The following evidence is from the Consular Reports of 1867 on 'The Condition of Christians in Turkey.'

Sir R. Dalzell, writing from Rustchuk, notes, as one of 'the principal grievances at present complained of,' 'the non-admission of Christian evidence,' 'notwithstanding the repeated assurances given to me by Midhat Pasha,' who was at the time Governor-General of the district. And then he gives the following illustration in a note :—'As to the manner in which Christian evidence is got rid of, &c. A Kaimakam, Mudir, &c., refuses to hear a Christian offering evidence; he then makes his Medjlis (Council) put their seals to a mazbata (*procès-verbal*), stating that the accused was discharged, there being no ipsat (proof): the fact being, not that there is no evidence, but that there is no Mussulman evidence. The Governor-General rests satisfied

¹ P. 35.

² P. 50.

³ P. 58.

with the mazbata as he receives it ; and if the matter is inquired about, the mazbata, approved by the Governor-General, is produced by the Porte to show that the proceedings were perfectly regular At Kustendji an Englishman was lately murderously assaulted by a Turk : the case is under investigation. The Vice-Consul informs me that the Mudir offered difficulties to the admission of Christian evidence. The Vice-Consul then required the Mudir to state in writing that he declined to receive the Christian evidence. This the Mudir very naturally was afraid to do, and admitted the evidence. Had the complainant been a Rayah, the evidence would not have been put in.' ¹

Vice-Consul Sankey, of Kustendji, says :—

'In a court of justice, when a Turk is plaintiff or defendant, Christian testimony is not received, and a Rayah, although able to produce fifty witnesses, has to pay two Turks to bear witness for him ; and this is of daily occurrence.' ²

Consul Wilkinson, of Salonica, says :—

'The chief grievance of the Christians, the non-admission of their testimony before the civil tribunals, has been only nominally removed ; for in the mixed courts established since the promulgation of the Hattihumayoun, the proportion of Christians to Mussulmans is so small as to place the decisions virtually altogether in the hands of the latter. It is besides in the power of the Cadi, who sits in those courts as one of the judges, either to reject the evidence of Christian witnesses by evoking the Sher'eat or religious law, or refer the case in dispute to the Mehkemé, a tribunal which is under the jurisdiction of the Sheik-ul-Islam, where Christian evidence is not admitted, and in which the Cadi is sole judge.' ³

¹ P. 1.

² P. 3.

³ P. 5.

Vice-Consul Maling, of Cavalla, says :—

‘The great test of the equality of Christian and Mussulman before the law, the admission of Christian evidence, signally fails before the experience of the last ten years. Christian evidence is utterly rejected in the lower criminal courts, and only received in the higher when corroborated by a Mussulman. But as virtually the Spiritual Courts are paramount and leave no jurisdiction to the others, Christian testimony is practically ignored altogether, as the Spiritual Courts will take no notice of it. . . A Mussulman’s simple allegation, unbacked by evidence or even by his oath, will upset the best founded and most incontrovertible claim. The nearest Court of Appeal being 180 miles away, the Christian is, of necessity, in most cases a helpless sufferer.’¹

‘The rejection of Christians’ evidence is one of their fundamental rules,’ says Vice-Consul Sandwith in his description of the Courts of Cyprus.’²

Consul Sandison, writing from Broussa, says :—

‘In fact, when a Rayah prefers a criminal suit against a Mussulman, he is required by the Criminal Court to support it by Mussulman witnesses, who, if there were any such present when the offence was committed, will rarely or never appear against one of their own creed in favour of a Christian. . . . Such requirement of Mussulman evidence is, however, in direct contravention of the rules prescribed to the Court in conformity with the Hatti-humayoun, subversive of the principles on which it was established, and of the ends for which it was adopted. Christian subjects are thus virtually debarred of those rights to justice accorded to them by the Imperial Edict, and the infringement of

¹ P. 29.

² P. 53.

which is a serious grievance calling for remedy. This lies mainly, if not entirely, at the will of the Ministers of the Porte, for the Mussulman members of the local judicature have declared to me that if they were persuaded their Government was in earnest, and insisted on carrying out the ordinances in favour of Christians, they must obey. But, on the contrary, they found that any deficiencies on that score met with toleration, not with censure, in high quarters. It is rather corroborative of this that when an eminent Minister of State was at one time sent as governor here, in conversation with whom I alluded to hearing nothing of the Criminal Court which had been recently established, his highness said that he had taken the discharge of its functions on himself, without assigning any necessity for the suppression of the Mixed Tribunal.¹

Lord Hartington, Mr. Forster, and others have given it as their opinion that the misdeeds of Turkey are due more to the weakness of the provincial administration than to the bad faith of the central Government. I believe, on the contrary, that the arch-transgressor, the fountain of all the mischief, is the Sublime Porte. Consul Sandwith's experience on that point is capable of being supported by a mass of corroborative evidence. Officials in the provinces are corrupt and cruel because they know very well that so long as Christians are the victims they may reckon on the most absolute impunity. The truth is, equality between the Christian and Mussulman is a sheer impossibility under any Mohammedan Government wielding independent power. It never has existed, and it never can. At present I content myself with making the assertion ; in a subsequent chapter I intend to prove it. Consul

¹ P. 66.

Rassam, who has a long and extensive experience of the practical working of Islam, is at one with me on this point, as the following passage will show. It is taken from a despatch addressed to Lord Lyons, the British Ambassador at Constantinople, and dated 'Moossul, April 20, 1867':—

'There are two instances which to the Mahometan are insurmountable—to rise before a Christian and to receive in the Mehkemeh (Court of Justice) the evidence of a Christian against a Mahometan. These are religious dogmas which will never alter unless the whole fabric of their religion passes away and another institution is planted in its stead. I have opened the subject before the doctors of law, and they assert, "These are dogmas based on our religious principles; and if his Majesty the Sultan wishes to order anything contrary, the Mahometan population collectively will not obey him;" and they have added, "that such a step might bring on an insurrection."'”¹

It is unnecessary to accumulate further proof on this point.² Let it suffice, therefore, to say that one of the demands of the Andrassy Note, to which Lord Derby gave a reluctant 'general' assent, is 'equality before the law' in the matter of 'Christian evidence against

¹ Consular Reports of 1867, pt. ii. p. 1.

² I have confined myself to evidence furnished by the Consular Reports because I consider that sufficient; but I have evidence in abundance from other sources also, of which the following may be given by way of sample. Mr. Wright, who has been for some years at the head of the Irish Presbyterian Mission at Damascus, says, 'I was present in the Supreme Court of Justice at Damascus when the evidence of Her Britannic Majesty's Consul was refused by the judge because he was a Christian, and the evidence of his Moslem stable-boy taken instead.'—*Slaves and Turks*, p. 119.

Mussulmans.’¹ So that down to the present moment the Government of Turkey stands convicted before Christendom of holding its Christian population in a state of abject and cruel outlawry—and this in violation of a succession of the most solemn promises (some of them being, moreover, treaty engagements), extending over a period of forty years.

But I may be reminded that one of the modern reforms of Turkey has been the establishment of Mixed Courts of Justice—Courts, that is, composed partly of Christian and partly of Mussulman judges; and it may accordingly be objected that if the Christians do not receive justice the responsibility must lie with their own representatives on the seat of judgment. Sir Henry Bulwer, indeed, suggests this answer in one of the questions which he addressed to the Consuls in 1860:—‘Are many of the grievances,’ he asks, ‘of which the Christian population complain owing to the conduct of their own authorities?’ that is, as he goes on to explain, the Christian members of ‘the Medjlis or Local Councils.’ Consul Abbott pierced the suggested sophism with an answer which smacks of sarcasm. ‘Sometimes,’ he says, ‘it is owing to the conduct of their own authorities. The Christian member of the Medjlis being a nonentity and not allowed to differ in his opinion from his Mussulman colleagues, is unable to come forward and protect his co-religionists from any act of injustice.’²

Instead of employing veiled sarcasm like Consul Abbott, Acting-Consul Zohrab, writing from Bosna-Serai, bluntly contradicts the British Ambassador’s

¹ Parl. Papers of 1876, No. 2, p. 76.

² Consular Reports of 1860, p. 6.

interrogatory suggestion, and lays the blame on the right shoulders:—

‘The grievances of which Christians complain,’ he says, ‘must be attributed to the *Turkish* authorities. A Greek and a Catholic Christian are admitted into each Medjlis to represent Christian interests. Their presence is not of the slightest utility; indeed it is prejudicial to the Christians, as by it they appear to approve of acts of injustice against the Christians. The Medjlis are invariably opposed to progress and good government.’¹

This is a fair specimen of the consular evidence in the year 1860, and we may therefore again pass over some years and see what the consuls have to tell us in the year 1867.

Vice-Consul Sankey, writing from Kustendje, describes the composition of the Courts as follows:—

‘The local government is carried on by two Councils (Medjlises)—the Administrative Council, presided over by the Governor, and that of Justice, of which the Cadi is president. The members composing these Councils are supposed to be elected by popular votes. It is done in this wise:—

‘The Governor gives a list of persons chosen by himself; this list is sent the round of the district, the electors having the option of objecting to or approving of the persons named in the list, but not of substituting other names; whatever their decision makes no difference in the result; the Governor reports to his superior that certain persons have obtained a certain number of votes, and they are declared duly elected. The members of the Medjlis receive pay, and are chosen by the Governor. They therefore, without cavil or remark, append their signatures to any document pre-

sented to them. Most of them are illiterate, and the fashion of seals in lieu of signatures, *in general use in Turkey*, renders the knowledge of reading and writing unnecessary I believe the Cadis have no positive instructions to receive Christian testimony; but in no case is it taken when a Mussulman is plaintiff or defendant.’¹

Vice-Consul Maling, writing from Cavalla, says:—

‘It is only to honorary posts in the Administrative Councils and in certain Law Tribunals that Christians are admitted on the footing of an insignificant and powerless minority. In the Municipal Councils, which combine the exercise of administration with certain judicial functions, the Christian members are to the Mussulman, under the most favourable circumstances, as one to five. In the Tribunals of Commerce the disproportion is somewhat less. Neither of these Courts owes its existence to the Hatti-humayoun; but the Act of 1856 evidently recognised the necessity of reform in their composition. To the Hatti-humayoun is due, however, the admission of Christian assessors to the Criminal Courts.

‘In the Courts having exclusive jurisdiction in matters of real property, wills, successions, wards and minors, only Mussulmans can officiate as judges, and the law administered is the Koranic or Spiritual Code. But virtually these Spiritual Courts over-ride and usurp the functions of all the other Courts. Nine-tenths of causes for trial, civil, commercial and criminal, are referred by the arbitrary fiat of the Governor-in-Council to their arbitrament. Were the Koranic law dealt out by them in impartial justice and purity, the system

¹ Consular Reports on the Condition of Christians in Turkey in 1867, pt. i. p. 4.

would still be an unmitigated evil ; but the Judges, Mollahs, and Cadis are renumerated solely by fees, and their systematic and unblushing corruption is acknowledged by none more frankly than by the Turks themselves.

‘ Were freedom of debate and vote even dreamt of, still the decision would be virtually in the hands of the Mussulman majority. But the Christian dares not so much as record his dissent, as it would be the signal of his removal from office and for persecution. At best the Christian assessor has but an imperfect colloquial acquaintance with the language in which proceedings are conducted, and he is called on to be a party to acts drawn up in studiously vague and inflated Turkish phraseology, of which, were it even thought needful to read it to him, he does not understand a word. It must be said, too, that the class from which the Christian assessors are chosen does not fairly, nor by any means, represent the average intelligence of that community. On the one hand, every well-to-do intelligent Christian, who can, obtains some foreign protection, and thus makes himself ineligible for office. On the other hand, pushed by fear of persecution or by love of trade, the Christian is a very migratory being. He may thus acquire wealth and eminence as a settler in another locality, but is only qualified to hold office in the particular district which gave him birth. In this state of the law a numerous class amongst the Christians is shut out from taking any share in public life ; and it is worthy of remark that the classes eligible to office, the stay-at-home and less adventurous, are also the least intelligent, worst educated, and most subservient members of the community.’¹

¹ Pp. 28-9.

Through all these reports I have come across but one instance in which a Christian assessor ventured even to suggest that he had a right to have an opinion of his own, and the result was not encouraging. The incident is related as follows by Consul Calvert, whose report is dated from Monastir :—

‘The Turkish Secretary (of the court) presented a mazbathá relating to the public accounts for one of the Christian members to put his seal to. The Christian member inquired before doing so what the document related to. The Muhasebedji (accountant-general), over-hearing the inquiry, called out, “None of your nonsense, sir ; just give your seal !”’¹

Consul-General Sir A. B. Kemball, writing from Bagdad, bears similar testimony :—

‘The civil disabilities of the Christians,’ he says, ‘are such as flow from the rigid exclusion of Christian evidence from Mahometan law courts, professedly so called, to which the adjudication affecting life, landed property, and inheritance must of right be referred . . . The Municipal or Executive Council (Medjlis-i-Kubeer) and the two Urf Tribunals have each one Christian member and one Jewish member, who are of course cyphers. Though rarely consulted, their seals are required or enjoined to all minutes of proceedings, resolutions, &c.’²

Such was the condition of the Christians of Turkey before the law courts up to 1867 ; and such is their condition now, as anyone may see who will take the trouble to consult the Blue Books published in the course of last year.³ There is absolutely no improvement whatever.

No one will suspect her Majesty’s Consuls of being biassed against Turkey. Their bias is, in fact, all the

¹ P. 20.

² Consular Reports of 1867, pt. ii. p. 3.

³ See Parl. Papers, No. 2. pp. 36–40.

other way, partly from the natural *esprit* of supporting the supposed traditional policy of England, and partly from the disfavour with which reports reflecting severely on Turkey have generally been received at the British Embassy at Constantinople. We may reasonably assume, therefore, that if ever the Consuls err it is sure to be on the side of too much leniency towards Turkey. Still it may be well to conclude this part of the subject with a piece of independent testimony which confirms to the letter the damaging indictment of the Consular Reports.

In the summer of 1860 the Grand Vizier of that day made a tour of inspection through Bulgaria to examine for himself and on the spot what ground there was, if any, for the cries of distress which had reached his ears even at Constantinople. The people were invited to present their complaints without fear at the court of inquiry which the Grand Vizier held at the principal towns. 'Not a single case of oppression experienced by Christians at the hands of Turks had been brought to his cognisance. His satisfaction at this result was in some measure troubled by the annoyance he felt at having been sent on an errand so futile to the provinces at a time when he might have been profitably employed in the capital.'¹

This is superb! Here is the highest official in the civil government of Turkey taking the trouble to make a tour of inspection through Bulgaria for the express purpose of hearing complaints and remedying grievances. And lo, and behold! there are no grievances at all!

¹ Consular Reports of 1860, p. 20. The Report from which this quotation is made is from the pen of the philo-Turk Consul-General Longworth, who seldom lets slip an opportunity of saying a good word for the Turks at the expense of the Christians, and of the Servians in particular.

In town after town he finds himself officiating at a maiden assize, so that at last he becomes fairly satiated with this monotony of Arcadian felicity and innocence. In Vidin, it is true, he received a petition with 300 Christian signatures, 'containing vague charges against the local authorities.' These 'vague charges' consisted of 'cases of outrage and cruelty, and of forced conversion to Islamism.' Of course there *could* be no foundation for such accusations against a True Believer, and therefore, as was natural, 'this document he [the Grand Vizier] did not hesitate to characterise as spurious.'¹ The maiden assizes are thus easily explained.

The Grand Vizier had with him on this occasion an assistant, Suleyman Bey by name, who in fact held the inquiry while his superior was solacing himself with such mundane pleasures as the obsequious officials could provide for him. Kanitz knew this Suleyman, and gives a lively sketch of him. He had studied diplomacy in the great Courts of Europe, and was often employed on extraordinary missions. During the Crimean War he was placed by the side of Aarif Effendi, the Turkish Minister at Vienna. He had also some experience at other German Courts, including Berlin. Later on he was made a Pasha, and was named Vali of Adrianople; but he died at Constantinople in 1869 on the eve of starting to take possession of his new governorship.

'Turkey lost in Suleyman Bey,' says Kanitz, 'one of its most gifted statesmen. He liked to point his discourse with quotations from French writers. His features seemed to me expressive and benevolent. A certain touch of sarcasm, however, overspread his countenance when he began to speak on the deplorable

¹ Consular Reports of 1860, p. 20.

relations between Turkey and her Rayahs. In the spirit of an advocate Suleyman used his deep insight into politics to parry, with some often-telling arguments, the reproaches of his opponent ; and he always laboured to put forward prominently the beneficent designs of the Sultan for his Rayahs in a convincing way. Then he would say emphatically, "It is to be hoped that Russia and France will come to grief while they are exciting the Rayahs to revolt against their own Sovereign." And then he continued, "Where is the country in which the governed at this day do not complain of the operation of the taxes and the caprice of officials? I have here a hundred petitions of complaints ¹ asking for my assistance in cases of the most piteous need. Let us take one case, and you will see that it belongs to a class of complaints which with you come daily and hourly before the inferior courts. A Rayah complains that his rich Turkish neighbour has robbed him by night of his daughter. The pope [parish priest] and the elder of the community have signed the petition, and attested the fact on oath. I had the Turkish proprietor brought before me. He admitted that the Christian girl was in his harem, but he said that she had come to him willingly. The hard work in her parents' house had wearied her ; the beautiful garments, the kind treatment of the Turkish women, pleased the Bulgarian maiden ; she herself wished to become a Turk, and never wished to go back to her parents. What could I do, looking at all the facts,' said Suleyman, "but hear the maiden herself?" "But," he continued, "granted that the rich Turk had really attracted the girl to himself ; confess if similar

¹ The Grand Vizier himself, as we have seen above, assured Consul-General Longworth that he had received only one petition, which 'he did not hesitate to characterise as spurious.'

incidents do not often—almost daily—occur in different forms in all European towns without being talked about? But had we had here in Nish a Russian or French Consul this event would have been raised to the dignity of a *cause célèbre*; notes would have been exchanged; the European press would have been alarmed, and St. Marc Girardin would have had some piquant matter for a new anti-Turkish article in the *Revue des deux Mondes*.”

Suleyman did not tell him what the girl herself had said. But even if his insinuation was true, that she had gone to the harem of her own free will, wearied by the monotony of home work, and attracted by the luxury enjoyed by the slaves of the harem, we have in that fact itself a vivid picture of the immorality of Turkish rule. Suleyman's retort, plausible as it is at first sight, ignores one all-important difference between the abduction of a Christian maiden in Bulgaria and a similar incident in France or Russia. In the former case the abduction is sanctioned by the public opinion of Turkey, by its Government, by its moral code, and by its Sacred Scriptures. In the latter it lies under the ban of all these. In Turkey, however, these abductions are more often the result of force than of enticement, as I shall show further on. But Turkish so-called virtue is so corrupt all round that a retort like Suleyman Bey's can be demolished, not by one, but by many rejoinders. So let us hear how Herr Kanitz met it.

‘Suleyman Bey was visibly excited. The innate Moslem nature had triumphed for a moment over the usually cool diplomatist. Suleyman forgot what abnormal events had brought about his mission here at all. He forgot how in his ill-humoured complaints about the partisan interposition of the European Powers

and the injustice of the press which raised its voice for the Rayahs, he had himself just before pronounced sentence of death upon the Turkish Government. I answered Suleyman Bey pretty much as follows :—

“ Yes, Effendi, you have spoken quite truly. In our countries there are many hundreds of atrocities and complaints (like those which at present claim your valuable time, and in consequence of which the *alter ego* of the Sultan [the Grand Vizier] has himself undertaken so extensive a journey) which would scarcely have got beyond the threshold of the ordinary police court. Even that special case of seduction, deplorable as we should have thought it in a moral point of view, would have been decided, under the ordinary administration of the law, without any special intervention from any other quarter:

“ But where are we (pardon my saying so, Effendi) to find the officials appointed by the State for carrying out the law in Courts of Justice, in Turkey? Where can the Rayah find these when the complaint is against a Moslem? Without your presence here would the father of the abducted maiden have been allowed by the Moslem judge even so much as to bring the matter into court at all? Does the present constitution of the local courts give the Rayah the slightest guarantee for justice against a True Believer? I myself, Effendi, in the year 1858 found, during a twelvemonth's sojourn in the Herzegovina, sufficient opportunity for learning the nature of the Turkish Courts of Justice; and only a few weeks ago I was in Zvornik before a Bosniac judge on account of a groundless suspicion that I was a Russian spy. And in that town, half inhabited by Christians, I looked for the provisions of the Hatt-i-humayoun which promise to the Rayah equality of

rights with the Turk. Where were those rights? Next to the presiding Mudir, I saw the Cadi, the Mufti, and ten Moslems behaving with great levity. I saw in a corner of the room, unregarded by all, an old grey-beard crouching on the ground. This was the Christian representative of Christian Zvornik. During the whole of the proceedings he did not dare to say a single word in my favour. What good would it have been if he had? He was only tolerated there in order to comply formally and technically with the law of the Tanzimat and the last Hatti-cherif. I saw the man treated like a pariah; but he was *supposed* to represent the Christian community of the town of Zvornik.

“I have emphasised that word *supposed*, Effendi, that you may clearly understand what would have been the lot of this good man if he had really dared to occupy more than the corner that was allotted to him—if he had dared to take a seat on the quilted divan next to his Turkish colleagues, or to raise a voice equal to theirs. Yes, so long as his Majesty’s Courts are constituted as they are at Zvornik; so long as the evidence of Christians against Moslems is rejected; so long as the Koran and the Pandects written many years ago—I mean the Moultkā, which constitutes the ultimate standard of appeal on all points of law—and according to which it is already decided beforehand that the True Believer is always in the right, the Rayah always in the wrong: so much so that the Pasha who presumes to appeal from its dicta is liable to receive the bastinado as a revolutionary innovator;—so long as all this is so, Effendi, you cannot wonder if the voices of outsiders are raised on behalf of the rights of man outraged in the person of the Rayah, and if they insist that those provisions of the Tanzimat and the

Hatti-cherif of Gülhané, and the Hatti-humayoun, which are in the interests of the Christians, shall at last be made a reality.”¹

SECTION I.

SECURITY FOR LIFE.

Let us now see how this helplessness before the law affects what I have called the four primary conditions of well-being in any civilised community, namely, security for life, security for honour, security for religious freedom, and security for property.

And first as to security for life. Here again my first witnesses shall be her Majesty's Diplomatic and Consular Agents in Turkey.

The Syrian massacres are sufficiently near our own time to render any detailed reference to them unnecessary. But it is important at this moment to bear in mind three pregnant facts connected with them: first, that in every circumstance of bestial lust and fiendish cruelty they were quite on a par with the Bulgarian atrocities, though the public mind of England was not equally excited, the details being published only in the Blue Books. Secondly, that they were not the result of a sudden outbreak of Moslem fanaticism, but the deliberately planned policy of the Turkish authorities. Thirdly, that the regular soldiers of Turkey then, as recently in Bulgaria, surpassed the irregular troops in brutality and cruelty.

¹ Donau-Bulgarien und der Balkan: Historisch-geographisch-ethnographische Reisestudien aus den Jahren 1860-75; pp. 104-6.

In a despatch to Vice-Admiral Martin, Captain Paynter, of H.M.S. 'Exmouth,' says that he had succeeded in saving 'from the horrors of famine, murder, and violation upwards of 2,200 Christian women and children. . . . The whole of those wounded were shot or sabred flying from the town after their husbands and male children had been slaughtered.' 'The conduct of Osman Bey,' he adds, 'really appears in this age without a parallel. He first of all induced the Christians to surrender their arms. He then crowded the poor creatures in the courts of the Serai, and for eight days kept them with barely sufficient food to keep life together. And then, when unable to resist from physical debility, he opened the gates and allowed the Druses to rush in and massacre them to the number of 800 men, women, and children. The few that escaped owed their preservation to crawling under the bodies of the dead, and escaping under the cover of darkness.'¹

The Druses, however, were seen to 'separate their connection' with their victims 'in a more expeditious manner,' to quote the Premier's phrase, than suited the love of cruelty for cruelty's sake, which has always distinguished the Turkish soldiery. 'Many Christians whom I have examined,' says Mr. Cyril Graham, 'have sworn to me that they saw the soldiers taking part in the slaughter, and the subsequent behaviour of these brutal troops to the women was savage in the extreme. From the wounds I have seen both on the living and the dead, it would appear that they went to work with the most systematic cruelty. . . . Women the Druses did not slaughter, nor, for the most part, I believe, ill-

¹ Papers relating to the Disturbances in Syria, June 1860, p. 42.

use ; that was left for the Turks and Moslems to do, and they did it. Little boys of four and five years old were not safe ; these would be seized from their mother and dashed on the ground, or torn to pieces before her face ; or, if her grasp was too tight, they would kill it on her lap ; and in some cases, to save further trouble, mother and child were cut down together. Many women have assured me that the Turkish soldiers have taken their children, one leg in each hand, and torn them in two.'

This happened in Hasbeya, a large town under Mount Hermon, and the same scenes were enacted all over the Lebanon. Sidon was sacked, 'and for several days the slaughter continued. No Christian outside the town was in safety. If a man or male child, he was cut down ; if a woman, she was sure to be brutally ill-used.' The Druses looked on and exclaimed, 'After all, the Moslems understand the work best.' 'And yet,' adds Mr. Graham, 'the Governor of Sidon did not attempt to interfere, although Sidon, being a walled town, he had only to close the gates and prevent any armed Druses from entering.' So far from doing this, he let loose his own troops on the inoffensive Christians. So that the Druses had only to stand by and admire the superiority of the Ottoman troops in the art of butchery.

The town of Deir-el-Kamar was the scene of a similar tragedy. There, as elsewhere, the Governor first disarmed the Christian inhabitants, and then delivered them over to the tender mercies of his troops. All the males were killed, and the women reserved for a worse fate. 'I have had a vivid description of the whole scene,' says Mr. Graham, 'from some dozens of women who were there. They have told me how,

before their very face, they have seen husband, father, brothers, and children cut to pieces, and the pieces thrown in their face ; how they have been insulted by the Turkish soldiery. . . . I have good reason to believe, after a careful comparison of all the accounts, that from 1,100 to 1,200 males actually perished in that one day. . . . Almost every house was burnt and the streets crowded with dead bodies, most of them stripped, and mutilated in every possible way. My road lay through the town, and through some of the streets my horse could not even pass, for the bodies were literally piled up. . . . I saw little children, of not more than three or four years old, stretched on the ground, and old men with grey beards. In some places you could see the expression of agony ; in others, of last despair. One poor creature, on his knees, had been cut down as he appealed to the mercy of his murderers. I saw bodies without heads, and heads lying alone about the place ; all, all, lying unburied, to be devoured by the hyænas and wild beasts.'

And all this horror was the deliberate work of the Governor of the province, a Pasha in high favour at Constantinople ; 'revealing a degree of treachery,' as Mr. Graham observes, 'which it would be almost impossible to persuade a sober European statesman could be practised by an official in the high position of Governor of a great province.' It was, in truth, as Mr. Graham plainly asserts, a carefully planned scheme having for its object a 'premeditated extermination of the Christian race ;' and the arch-criminal was the Sublime Porte. Then, as now, it sent its troops under trusted officers on an errand of rapine and slaughter, and rewarded them when they had fulfilled their task. 'The Ottoman troops have distinguished themselves,' says Mr.

Graham, 'by their eagerness to slaughter the Christians and ill-treat the women. Othman Bey'—the treacherous butcher of Hasbeya—'entered Damascus a few days ago and received the honours of a conquering hero. Nothing can be more infamous than the behaviour of Ahmed Pasha and all the officials.'¹

The motive for this 'premeditated extermination of the Christian race' is revealed in a previous Parliamentary Blue Book, to which I must briefly refer. The Tanzimat which followed the famous Hatti-cherif of Gülhané pledged the Porte to permit Christians, whether subjects of Turkey or not, to purchase and hold land. This promise was formally and solemnly repeated to Europe by the Sultan in 1856. Relying on these assurances, a few Rayahs and some foreigners bought land in various parts of Turkey. Among the latter was a Mr. Dickson, an American citizen. He had bought some land in the neighbourhood of Jaffa, which he was farming himself in partnership with his son-in-law, a Prussian subject. The result is thus related by Consul Kayat in a despatch to Lord Clarendon, dated 'Jaffa, January 13, 1858 :—

'Five men broke into the house of Mr. Dickson, an American citizen, farmer here, wounded the said person, and murdered his son-in-law, Mr. Steinbeck, a

¹ Further Papers relating to Disturbances in Syria, pp. 4-46.

Mr. Graham's despatch was sent to the Foreign Secretary by the English Commissioner, Lord Dufferin, with a letter in which he says :—'Your Lordship may rely with implicit confidence on the accuracy of all Mr. Graham's statements of fact, as his knowledge of Arabic and his personal acquaintance both with the Druse and Maronite populations, combined with the opportunities he has had of visiting the places where those tragedies have occurred, will have given him peculiar facilities for arriving at the truth.'

Prussian subject, also farmer at this place. The villains remained on the premises five hours, and have violated the women, and have plundered all the property they could move.' 'It is not improbable,' the Consul proceeds, 'that the local authorities are encouraging in some way or other these frightful occurrences,'¹ 'in order to discourage the coming out of more Christian settlers. This idea seems to be true, for the Pasha has lately given verbal orders to the judge here not to write any title-deed for the sale of any landed property to Europeans and Americans.'²

Another cause of dire offence to the Moslem population was the religious toleration promised under the Hatti-humayoun. So long as the promise was allowed to remain a dead letter it was considered a legitimate diplomatic *ruse*; but the first attempt to translate it into the language of fact was immediately resisted at the instigation of the Pashas. An illustration of this is furnished by Vice-Consul Rogers in a despatch written in the summer of 1858. The Cadi of Nazareth prohibited a meeting of Christians, partly social and partly religious, because Moslems being permitted to attend, their faith might possibly be undermined. 'The Cadi,' says Mr. Rogers, 'used some strong threatening language in order to intimidate Elias-es-Saffôri [the Christian at whose house the meetings took place], saying that any Moslem who should become a Christian would be murdered according to the tenets of the Holy Law, and he who perverted him would bear the re-

¹ Other atrocities quite as bad are reported by the Consuls from different parts of Syria at this time.

² Despatches from Her Majesty's Consuls in the Levant respecting past or apprehended Disturbances in Syria: 1858 to 1860, p. 4.

sponsibility.' The Vice-Consul, who happened to be present, 'reminded the Cadi that his Majesty the Sultan had issued a firman, granting full liberty of conscience to all his subjects, by virtue of which firman any who from conviction wished to change his religion might do so without constraint. The Cadi answered disdainfully, "The Sultan eats melons," which is a vulgar expression, meaning that the Sultan talks nonsense. I remonstrated, at which the Cadi repeated his remark, adding that his Majesty's officers and subjects are only bound to obey him so long as his orders are in conformity with the laws.'¹ It follows of course that whenever the provisions of the Hatti-humayoun come into conflict with the Sacred Law they must remain a dead letter or be resisted by force. The voluminous Blue Books on the affairs of Syria and the Levant from 1858 to 1861 prove incontestably that the Syrian massacres, like the Bulgarian massacres, were a device of the Ottoman authorities to terrorise the Christian population into an uncomplaining submission to its intolerable wrongs. It is the traditional policy of the Turkish Government. Promises it will make in abundance; but nothing short of foreign force will ever compel their fulfilment.

When we speak of insecurity of life in Turkey, however, it is necessary to bear in mind that the periodical massacres which now and then startle Europe are but examples on a large scale of what goes on all the year round in detail among the Christian population of Turkey. This is the fact which it is so hard to bring home to the understanding of people in this country. If they could only be made to realise it in all its extent and

¹ Despatches from Her Majesty's Consuls in the Levant: 1858 to 1860, pp. 27-8.

hideousness they would not endure for a moment that any consideration of possible remote danger to 'British interests' should be urged as a reason for maintaining the 'independence and integrity' of a Government of which chronic murder, in every form of Oriental torture, is an inseparable incident. In the criminal statistics of other States murder, unfortunately, occupies a conspicuous place. But the murderer becomes at once an outcast from society, and the arm of justice is immediately raised to strike him down. In Turkey, on the contrary, the criminal-in-chief is the Government itself, which either commits the crime through its agents, or shields the guilty whenever the victim happens to be a Christian. The exceptions are so few, and so entirely due to extraneous causes, that it is safe to lay down the general proposition that the murderer of a Christian subject of the Porte is never punished. The following must suffice as examples of evidence which might be multiplied indefinitely. Consul Calvert relates—

' . . . the assassination of a poor and inoffensive shepherd, one of the Bulgarian Catholics, by two Turks, followers of a certain Mahmoud Bey. The only witnesses were two Christian lads who happened to be with the shepherd in his hut when these two Turks came and called him out. These lads never saw him alive again ; and next morning his dead body, bearing numerous marks of violence, was discovered at about half an hour's walk from the hut. The two lads were taken before the Medjlis Tikvesh, and then imprisoned ; whilst in prison they were tortured ; the younger, who was only ten years of age, by having burning coals heaped on his naked chest, and the other by flogging ; the object being to force them to keep silent as to the identity of the two Turks who had taken the shepherd away. The

case was brought to Monastir, where it underwent investigation; but for want of evidence sufficient to satisfy the Court of Criminal Enquiry (Istintak Medjlis), no one has ever been punished either for the murder or for the torture of the two lads. The villagers of Stragova, of which the shepherd was an inhabitant, were detained many months at Monastir, as well for the prosecution of this case, as to conduct an action against Mahmoud Bey, for having, only since they began to call themselves Catholics, appropriated some pasture lands and fields they had long been in undisturbed possession of. There were also other complaints of a serious character which required redress, but in every one of them they failed to obtain it.¹

‘In course of twenty-eight years of my official residence,’ says Consul Sandison, writing from Brussa, ‘there has been a succession of two dozen of different governors, so frequent have been the changes.’ ‘Very few indeed of these had any other object in view than the amassing of a fortune as rapidly as possible out of the property of the population committed to their charge. ‘Various of the number ranked very low for character or intelligence, and under several of them tortures were inflicted on innocent men.’

‘A most flagrant instance of this was the imprisonment of some fifteen Greek villagers on a false charge of robbery, sustained by a conspiracy which was patronised by the Pasha. To carry this out these men were cruelly beaten, and threatened with death (if they divulged the fact); that being brought into my presence, at his Excellency’s request they recounted with minutiae their robbery of a carrier which never took

¹ Consular Reports of 1867, p. 18.

place. Having obtained a clue to the truth, and gone to the capital for other objects under leave, I was directed by Lord Stratford to go and explain the circumstances to the Grand Vizier. An investigation was ordered in consequence, which proceeded so far as to establish the innocence of the prisoners, and their having been subject to tortures, but by whose orders was never brought to light.’¹

‘Before the Chief District Court of Criminal Jurisdiction of Cavalla,’ says Vice-Consul Maling, ‘two Christians were in 1864 indicted for, and convicted of, the murder of a Mussulman, Christian witnesses in disproof of the charge being rejected, while a near relative of the alleged murdered person sat as a member of the Court. The iniquitous proceedings took their course: a judicial murder was effected in respect of one of the victims, a felon’s door opened on the other, the members of the Court officiate to this day, and the chief administrative officer, who packed the Court and approved the proceedings, *was shortly after promoted to a higher post in the Christian province of the Lebanon.*’²

‘Within my experience of twenty-five years in Turkey,’ says Consul Calvert, ‘I have not known a single instance in which a Mussulman has been condemned to death for the murder of a Christian upon purely Christian evidence.’³

One of the Blue Books published last year contains one of the most pathetic documents ever published in any language. It is a summary of the grievances which drove the Christians of Bosnia and Herzegovina into rebellion. It was forwarded to Lord Derby by

¹ Consular Reports of 1867, p. 67.

² *Ibid.* p. 29.

³ *Ibid.* p. 22.

Consul Holmes, with a pledge that if, on examination, he found that it contained 'exaggerations,' he would 'send his observations on its contents.' This was on the 1st of October, 1875, and as several batches of Blue Books have been published since then with no 'observations' from Mr. Holmes on the document from which I am about to quote, I may take the accuracy of its complaints for granted. In fact, they can all be substantiated to the letter by independent testimony. One quotation must suffice here:—

'Suppose a Turk is killed in some distant place among the barren mountains by an unknown person, they do not wait for inquiries and legal investigations; they cry aloud for vengeance and massacre. If they meet any Christian there they sack whole villages of Christians near the place of the crime, and ill-treat the inhabitants with impunity; they drive, like a herd of cattle, hundreds of heads of families with kicks and musket-butts; and when they come to the city the unrestrained Turkish rabble await them and accompany them to the courts and prisons with cries and groans, stoning and the most cowardly outrages, so that the consternation of the prisoners and the atrocities of the crowd reach the highest pitch. After that, the wretched Christians groan in the foul prisons, or are dragged to the courts, when they are again threatened, to make them confess the crime. They are told, "You know all about it; all you villains have conspired to murder that innocent Mussulman; we have evidence to prove it, and if you don't confess you will go to the gallows and the stake."¹ This tragedy goes on for months, until it is

¹ Here is an incidental allusion to the practice of impalement as still in vogue in Bosnia and the Herzegovina. I shall have something to say on that point presently.

found out that the assassin was some foreigner who had nothing to do with those poor Christians; or some Mahometan adversary of the murdered man. Then after this ill-treatment the Christians are sent back to their homes without any satisfaction; or when the fury has abated, and the Christians are found to be innocent, they say they have not ascertained with certainty (metaphysical perhaps) who was the assassin; so for the greater security, or rather to cover the enormous and disgraceful injustice, some of the principal Christians or those most hateful to the Turks, must rot in chains for years in the prisons; others, by favour and on giving bail, are sent to their wretched homes with a warning to be careful not to do so again. Would to God that such scenes were seldom and few in these unfortunate and thus barbarously tormented provinces! No security for life, for honour, for property. How can we seek for liberty and progress when we do not possess the most essential of the rights of man? viz., the right of life, honour, and property; for at every slight check, every trumpery suspicion amongst the Turks, from the arbitrary greed or fierce envy of the ill-disposed master, everything is uncertain, everything in danger.’¹

Let this suffice for the evidence of her Britannic Majesty’s Consular Agents as to the security of life enjoyed by the Christian population of Turkey. This class of evidence is especially valuable because the natural bias of the Consular body is to represent things in as favourable a light as possible for Turkey. As a rule, the Consuls take their cue from the British Embassy at Constantinople, and that cue points to

¹ Parliamentary Papers of 1867, p. 38, No. 2.

‘Russian intrigue’ as the most probable explanation of every mischief. So that in this case Consular testimony must be regarded as testimony extorted against the grain, and I fear I must add against personal interest, by sheer love of truth and honesty. It thus possesses the best of all guarantees of trustworthiness, supposing, of course,—what there is no reason to doubt—the competency of the witnesses in other respects.

I have seen, however, doubts thrown even on the evidence of Her Majesty’s Consuls. This has been done in a book just published by Messrs. St. Clair and C. A. Brophy under the title of ‘The Eastern Question in Bulgaria.’ A chapter is devoted to the ridicule of British Consuls and their reports. How much credit is due to the authors themselves the following quotations will show :—‘No atrocities have been committed by Mussulmans [in Bulgaria]. I have evidence to the contrary, and no evidence to prove even Mr. Baring’s report to be true.’ Mr. Schuyler’s report is ‘a cock-and-bull story, upon evidence of the most mendacious nature, and causes the British public to swallow all that pernicious nonsense as if it were official evidence; and thence all the mischief done by what are termed the Bulgarian Atrocity Meetings.’ ‘The only report which tallies with the facts is Edib Effendi’s’ (pp. 208, 297). The volume from which I have made these choice quotations is, in fact, the re-publication, with the addition of a few notes, of a trumpery book published eight years ago under the title of ‘A Residence in Bulgaria.’ I read it then, and I have read it now under its new title; and I will take the liberty of expressing my opinion of it in the language furnished by the authors. It is ‘pernicious nonsense,’ based ‘upon evidence of the most mendacious nature.’

But there is a graver aspect of the question. We learn from the Blue Books that a gentleman bearing the name of one of the authors of this volume holds a consular office in Turkey. If he is the same person, I ask whether it is proper that a gentleman in her Majesty's Consular Service should be permitted not only to cast discredit on the reports furnished to the Government by his colleagues, but also to denounce as 'pernicious nonsense,' founded 'upon evidence of the most mendacious nature,' crimes which even Lord Derby has held up to the reprobation of Europe?

What evidence, then, will the apologists of Turkey accept? Is a bluff English engineer, who relates in artless language of transparent honesty his five years' residence in Bulgaria making roadways for the Sultan, likely to have been bribed by General Ignatieff or the Omladina to malign the Turkish Government? The most ardent philo-Turk will scarcely hazard such an insinuation. So let us hear what Mr. Barkley has to say touching the security of life enjoyed by the people of Bulgaria. The scene of the following incident was Kustendjie, a place of which we have already heard in some of the extracts from the Consular Reports. The Kodjabachi, or head man of the little town, called one day on Mr. Barkley, who shall tell the rest in his own language:—

'He was a Bulgar, as were nearly all the inhabitants, and proved a quiet, decent fellow. There was a dash of melancholy in his looks, which we thought was accounted for when he told us that when the war first broke out,¹ a regiment of Bashi-Bazouks was sent up

¹ The war referred to is the Russian war of 1854. As the Bulgarians then resisted every solicitation to insurrection on the part of Russia, there was not the shadow of an excuse for the barbarity of the Turks.

here after a few Cossacks who had crossed the Danube and were acting as scouts. They encamped for the night on the very spot we were just quitting, and before they left the next morning they set fire to the town, and even took the corn out of the granary, piled it up in the streets, and burnt it. Some of the young Bulgars remonstrated with them, and were at once cut down and hacked to pieces. Of the horrors the women went through I dare not write ; but of one thing I feel sure :—so long as there is a Sultan in Turkey every Bulgar will curse him for having let loose such a mob of devils on them. We afterwards heard this corroborated by many Christians and a few Turks, though the latter tried to make the best of it.'

This outrage was inflicted on a peaceful population, unoffending subjects of that 'paternal Government' of which we hear so much just now. The only motive for the crime was the wanton love of cruelty engendered by centuries of unrestrained power over a defenceless people. This it is which makes the case of the Rayah so hopeless while the Turk rules over him. 'Nowhere in Turkey,' says Mr. Barkley, 'are isolated houses to be found ; for the good reason that, if there were, the owners would have their throats cut within a week.' It is of course the Rayah that suffers chiefly from this entire absence of security for life ; for he is an object of special hatred to the Turkish officials, and he is absolutely without any means of self-defence. But the village Turks also, though in a less degree, suffer grievously from the rapacity and brutal insolence of that brigand confederacy known in diplomatic language under the name of the Ottoman Government. In Bulgaria both Christians and Turks build their villages as far as possible from the highway,

in the hope of escaping the ravages of the officials who roam about the country seeking what they may devour.¹

The following story is vouched for by Mr. Evans, in his recently published book on Bosnia and Herzegovina (p. 313):—It was in the beginning of the insurrection, and nobody could go from one village to another without being provided with a Turkish pass. A Belgian engineer, who happened to be head of the Road Commission, was authorised to examine and set his *visé* on the passes of all who went along the road. A young Herzegovinian Christian passed the tent of the engineer, had his pass examined and *visé*, and then went his way. He had not proceeded far, however, when he was met by two Turks, not soldiers, or officials of any sort, therefore not persons entitled to question or molest him in any way. Nevertheless they stopped him, and in insolent tones demanded to see his pass. What chance had an unarmed Christian against two Turks, armed to the teeth? The Herzegovinian therefore obeyed the summons, and showed his pass. The two Mussulmans, who could not read a syllable of any language on earth to save their lives, declared that the pass was not correct, and seizing hold of the Christian, began to drag him along towards the tent of the Belgian. They had not proceeded far, however, when they dragged the young Herzegovinian into a field of maize, and hacked him to pieces with their kandjiars. Having finished their butchery, they walked coolly away, through a crowd of Christians who had been attracted to the spot by the cries of the murdered man. The murderers had no malice against their victim; he was

¹ Four Years in Bulgaria. By H. C. Barkley, Civil Engineer, pp. vi-vii. 18-19. Cf. 'Ranke's Slavonian Provinces,' pp. 457-8.

a total stranger to them. But he was a Christian, and they wished to have a 'lark' by hacking to pieces a *giaour*.

Evidence of this sort might be accumulated to any extent from the most various sources ; but I think I have produced enough to prove that security for life is a blessing totally unknown to the Christian population of Turkey. It is not merely that they are exposed to occasional outbursts of fanaticism on the part of their oppressors. That is bad enough in all conscience. But the horrible nature of their bondage can only be realised when we learn that the Turk holds the Christian's life so cheap that in the mere wantonness of sport or of caprice he will think nothing of putting an end to it by his kandjiar or short sword. He seldom uses his pistol ; for why should he waste his shot on an infidel dog who has no arms for self-defence ? Besides, the Turk likes to hack and mutilate his victim, and there is no weapon like the kandjiar so handy for that kind of work.

I have quoted from the experiences of an English engineer in Bulgaria to show the precarious tenure on which the Rayah enjoys his life. Curiously enough a French engineer has recently published *his* experiences of some years' duration in Bulgaria, and they tally in all respects with Mr. Barkley's, except that the Frenchman's picture is of still more sombre hues. Here is one illustration of Turkish rule :—

'The Bulgarians stand in great fear of the Turks. One day, as we were on our way from Sophia, we saw a young Mussulman soldier, without any conceivable motive, draw his kandjiar, and with all his might began striking at the poor drivers of the arabas. These fled without daring to use the hatchets which they are

each obliged to have in their arabas or waggons for the inevitable repairs which their miserable vehicles require along the route. When the young Turk had wounded several of them he quietly replaced his weapon in his girdle; but drew it quickly out again to use it on the engineers for having strongly remonstrated with him on his conduct. But he put it back again in double quick time when he saw the strangers handling the arms which they were accustomed to carry on their persons.' ¹

This, be it again remembered, did not happen during the recent disturbances; it is one of the ordinary incidents in the every-day life of the Bulgarian Christian. And the sad feature in the case is that the Turk, in most cases, does not understand that he is guilty of any cruelty, or even of misconduct. His religion, combined with the brutalising sense of unbridled tyranny instilled into him from his infancy, makes him regard the Rayah as a creature belonging to a totally different order of being from himself—a creature who holds all that he possesses, even life itself, not as of right, but by the favour of his Mussulman master, who may withdraw that favour when it suits his convenience or pleasure to do so. The young Turk who hacked the unoffending Bulgarian waggoners with his kandjia, possibly for the mere fun of the thing, may have been gentle and kind-hearted in other relations of life. It simply did not occur to him that he was acting brutally in slicing the body of a Rayah any more than it seems to an Englishman in India that he is acting brutally when he is enjoying the sport of pigsticking.² Re-

¹ *La Question d'Orient dévoillé, ou La Vérité sur La Turquie*, p. 24.

² This comparison has more point than appears on the surface,

monstrate with a Neapolitan vetturino for ill-using his horses, and he will probably reply, with a shrug of wonder at your ignorance, ‘Che avete, signore? *Non sono Cristiani!*’ Such is the feeling of the dominant Turk towards the subject Rayah. His behaviour to Christians who are not subjects of Turkey, and who are consequently out of his power, and will probably return his blow with interest, is quite different. To them the Turk is courteous enough, especially in Constantinople and other towns under the influence of Western power. And so they come home full of admiration for the Turk and of indignation against his libellers. Let them go into some Turkish province and disguise themselves as Rayahs, and they will soon return with a very different opinion of the object of their admiration. Let us hear what Consul Hankey, with his long experience, has to say upon the subject:—

‘In their daily relations the Rayah is made to feel the small estimation in which he is held by his masters. A Turk will not rise to receive him; he will be kept waiting for hours, although the master of the house is unoccupied. In travelling, if an educated Turk meets with a Christian who can converse with him, he is extremely cautious so long as he believes himself to be talking to a foreigner; should he discover his fellow-

‘Pig’ is one of the opprobrious epithets employed towards the Christian subjects of the Porte even in official documents.

Ubicini quotes the following from an official report of a certain Pertew Effendi to the Sultan:—‘Et comme dans les règlements du porc, que l’on nomme le pape, &c.’ . . . ‘Par l’effet de ces mille ruses et cajoleries, qui sont d’accord avec la nature perverse de cette troupe de cochons, &c.’—*Lettres sur la Turquie*, vol. ii. p. 445.

The italics are not mine. ‘Le pape’ is of course the parish priest. Mr. Nassau Senior gives corroborative evidence in his *Journal kept in Turkey and Greece*.

traveller to be a Rayah, his demeanour instantly changes, and in many cases he will not afterwards acknowledge the other's salutation.

‘The petty vexations to which Rayahs are subjected are of hourly occurrence, and patent to all unprejudiced observers.

‘In the last eighteen years I have been resident in different parts of Turkey; and this is, I believe, without exaggeration the actual position of the Christian subjects of the Sultan in European Turkey—in places, too, where the conduct of the local authorities is subject to the criticism of foreigners and foreign consulates.

‘In Asiatic Turkey, except in some seaport towns, the only protection a Rayah has for person and property is what he purchases from some influential member of the Turkish community. His complaints are answered by blows, and he is the humble slave of any Mussulman beggar.’¹

So much as to the amount of security for life and person enjoyed by the Rayah of Turkey.

SECTION II.

SECURITY FOR HONOUR.

INSECURITY of honour is a grievance harder to endure even than insecurity of life; and the higher the standard of female virtue is, the deeper of course is the wrong inflicted by its violation. Now all respectable writers are agreed that nowhere in the world is the standard of female virtue higher than among the Slave

¹ Consular Reports of 1867, p. 4.

population of Turkey.¹ ‘The Bulgarian women,’ says Ranke, the well-known historian, who lived among them and knew them intimately, ‘are gentle, compassionate, and laborious. The motherly and sisterly care they bestow on the stranger-guest in their cabins is really affecting. Their demeanour towards him is marked with the perfect confidence of innocence, for their virtue has no need of the precautions which are elsewhere necessary. He sleeps on the same floor with the mother, the wife, and daughters of the household. They are, next to the Greeks, the handsomest women in European Turkey, and are specially remarkable for the length and luxuriance of their hair, with which they could literally cover themselves as with a garment; it often sweeps the ground below their feet. The young girls let their tresses flow loosely, and their only head-dress is a wreath of flowers or a single rose.’²

Mr. Barkley, who has spent five years among the Christians in Bulgaria, confirms Dr. Ranke’s testimony

¹ It will be apparent from a remark on a previous page that I do not rank Messrs. Brophy and St. Clair among respectable writers. On the comparative chastity of Turks and Christian Rayahs, as on other questions, they are at variance with all respectable authorities. Here is their testimony:—‘When you find Bulgarian or Greek villages in close proximity to Turkish settlements, the women are moral, and the men as honest as Rayahs can possibly be; but when there are some villages purely Christian clustered together, the women are Messalinas and the men scoundrels!’ ‘Turkish rule alone keeps the poison under. Woe to these people if the Turks ever leave them!’—*The Eastern Question in Bulgaria*, p. 314.

It is sad to see two men, one of whom appears to have borne her Majesty’s Commission, and the other to be now employed in our Consular Service, allowing their maniacal hatred of Russia to drive them into these brutal and wantonly mendacious calumnies against a people so singularly chaste as the Slaves of Turkey.

² Slave Provinces, p. 460.

to the letter. 'I never lived,' he says, 'among any race where female virtue is more highly prized than it is among the Bulgarians, and I can safely assert that though our English workmen, men of all sorts and all characters, lived for months at a time in Bulgarian villages on the most intimate terms with the women, yet there was never the faintest whisper of scandal. The village girls, though always ready for a laugh or a talk, never drift into levity of conduct, but seem innately to possess virtue and self-respect. As a race, both men and women are well-grown and good-looking, and one can see, from their lissom erect carriage and healthy appearance, that from infancy they have been well fed and well clothed. If only absolute security for person and property could be obtained, I believe Bulgaria would be one of the most prosperous countries in Europe.'¹

'The Bulgarians are a most virtuous people,' says Bianconi, a French engineer, who has also lived among them for years. 'The young girls are remarkable for their modesty.' Again :—' Bent under the yoke for so long a time, the Bulgarians have forgotten their rights and their power ; nor, indeed, have they the means of combining in self-defence. Their character, rendered pusillanimous by oppression, makes them accept without anger all the humiliations and injustice heaped upon them ; and meanwhile they are a most industrious people, and their manners are pure in spite of their servitude and in spite of the frightful and infamous corruption of their masters.'²

The Consular Reports are equally emphatic in bearing testimony to the virtue and industry of the

¹ Five Years in Bulgaria, p. x.

² La Vérité sur La Turquie, pp. 24, 178.

Bulgarians. Let one quotation suffice :—‘ Both sexes are comfortably and solidly dressed, and evince, as well as their apartments, that sense of order and neatness is the principal rule of their households. Their behaviour is no less laudable. License, intemperance, and other vices, the appendici of over-civilization, are almost unknown among them. . . . As far as my experience goes, I consider the Bulgarians to be, on the whole, a shrewd, active, and industrious people, ranking in capacity and intelligence with any other of the European races. They require only the full development of their good qualities for attaining a high accomplishment in modern civilization. Unlike the Greeks, who mean to improve their social position by the politics of the coffee-houses, the Bulgarians put their hands to work and try the solution of the national economical questions in the true practical way.’¹

Such being the esteem in which female virtue is held among the Christians of South-eastern Europe, let us see how it fares under Turkish rule. The evidence which I am about to quote, let it be remembered, does not belong to any of those periodical massacres which occur in Turkey with almost the regularity of a natural law : it illustrates the rule, not the exception, of the life to which the Christian subjects of Turkey are doomed. And here again my first witness shall be one of her Majesty’s Consular Agents. ‘The Turkish police,’ says Major Cox, ‘live at the expense of the inhabitants ; and such is the moral influence they possess over the minds of the Christian peasants that there is nothing which they may not do with impunity in some of the remote villages. I believe all that can

¹ Consular Reports of 1867, p. 44.

be said as to the violation of females may be said under this head: it is simply that, as a rule, the women will not offer any resistance to a Mussulman—they are treated with so little respect by their own husbands that but a small sense of morality exists among them. The husband is not ashamed to confess that he goes to sleep in the stable, and leaves his Mussulman guest to do as he pleases with his wife and daughters.’¹

This is a specimen of the rash generalisation of the British traveller in Turkey. I gather from the Blue Book that Major Cox was not employed as a regular Consul; but that, travelling through the country, and being an intelligent man, he was asked by the British Ambassador at Constantinople to send to our Foreign Office the benefit of his observations on the condition of the Christians in Bulgaria. His report evinces diligence, and the facts which he states are for the most part so abundantly confirmed from other sources that they may be accepted as trustworthy. That the same cannot be said of his inferences, the specimen given above sufficiently proves. The facts are as Major Cox states them. Turkish officials, from the lowest to the highest, quarter themselves on the Christian population, turning the men out of the house; but not the women, or the boys if they are good-looking—*φωνηέντα συνέτοισι*. And no resistance is offered, says Major Cox, because ‘the moral influence’ of the Turk is so extraordinary. But the truth is that the only resistance that men, women, or boys can offer is flight or concealment, which is not always possible; and the ‘moral influence’ which seemed to Major Cox so extraordinary will appear simple enough when we learn the very practical

¹ Consular Reports of 1860, p. 60.

means by which it is in the habit of asserting itself. A few examples will suffice :--

' Besides the wholesale robbery of the great Turks, there is the petty oppression of the little Turks. One of them, with his belt full of pistols, walks up to a Rayah's house. He calls out the master, who perhaps is the head man of the village, and bids him hold his horse. He walks in, sits down, and makes the women light his pipe. *The girls all run away and hide in the outhouses, or among the neighbours. When he has finished his pipe, he asks for a fowl. He is told there is none. A few blows bring one out; a few more bread and wine. What is the source of this insolence? That he is armed, and that he is the only person in the village who is so. . . . If the Rayahs were armed, or the Turks were disarmed, there would be none of this petty oppression.*'¹

' The scarlet cap and the well-known garb of a Turkish irregular,' says Mr. Layard in his *Nineveh and its Remains*, ' are the signals for a general panic. *The women hide in the innermost recesses to save themselves from insult; the men slink into their houses, and offer a vain protest against the seizure of their property.*'

Dr. Badger tells, as a fact within his own personal knowledge, of women ' throwing themselves into the Tigris to escape dishonour,' while ' the Turkish Government was averse to any coercion or strong measures being adopted against ' the miscreants who thus embitter the lives of a virtuous population.'²

¹ A Journal kept in Turkey and Greece. By Nassau W. Senior, Esq., pp. 139-140.

² The Nestorians and their Rituals. By the Rev. George Percy Badger, vol. i. p. 278.

‘It is not in wild frenzy that the Turk destroys,’ says Mr. Wright, ‘but in calm blood, and in strict accord with his habits, and laws, and creed. The tendency of his rule is to corrupt, torment, destroy. The cruelties in Bulgaria disclose to me no new facts. I have known Christians beaten for claiming their own cattle from Mohammedan robbers. I have known Christian husbands murdered for protecting their own wives. My own house was the refuge of a lovely Christian bride, who in the full gaze of the village was hunted there like a gazelle by a Turkish Governor, who spoke French and affected civilization in general. I have seen a Christian murdered under the eye of a Turkish sentry, who would not put forth a hand to stay the assassin. There is scarcely a village in the Turkish Empire without its tragic tale. There is scarcely a Christian family without a hideous remembrance too horrible for thought or word.’¹

Dr. Sandwith states the following facts on his personal knowledge:—

‘For some time past’ (this was written in 1864), ‘the Porte has established in several Nahies, as those of Nish, Zaplagna, Vragna, &c., a species of police, consisting of armed bands, commanded by a Krs-serdar, charged with maintaining order in the country. Among these Krs-serdars there was one called Deli Mehmet. The latter arrived on the 8th December, 1859, at the village of Mateivtzé, near Nish, at the head of twenty seimens. His first act was to drive from his home the curé of the village and all the males, and to instal himself in it with his troop, which was lodged and boarded at the expense of the house for three days. During

¹ Slaves and Turks, pp. 118-9. Mr. Wright succeeded Dr. Porter as head of the Irish Presbyterian Mission in Damascus.

those three days he obliged the wife of the curé and the other women of the house . . . ¹ After having satisfied his brutal appetites he invited a Krs-serdar in the neighbourhood, named Arbar Bairakdar, to come to the priest's house with his twenty seimens. The latter arrived, and all the females in the house were placed at the disposal of this second band . . .'

Here are some of the experiences of the French engineer already quoted. He relates them as incidents in the ordinary life (*en temps ordinaire*) of the Bulgarian Rayah. For the truth of all these he personally vouches as an eye-witness, though powerless to help the victims, except in the last case :—

'A Yeni-Han des zaptiés furieux (fanatisés par les prédications des muftis et des ulémas) se jetèrent brusquement sur un grand nombre de femmes et de jeunes filles de la campagne qui s'étaient rendues au bourg à l'occasion de la foire ; ces pauvres gens s'enfuirent en poussant des cris d'épouvante ; mais les zaptiés les serrèrent de près, et, à grands coups de sabre et de kandjiar, en blessèrent une vingtaine. Le caïmakan ou gouverneur ne fit rien ; les zaptiés et quelques jeunes gens turcs qui s'étaient joints à eux dans cette affaire purent assouvir leurs passions brutales sur huit ou dix jeunes filles qui avaient demandé grâce.'

'Dans un autre village les zaptiés chargés de percevoir les dîmes arriérées commirent des actes beaucoup plus atroces. Ils réunirent une dizaine de femmes, et, après les passions assouvies, *ils s'amusèrent* de la sorte : l'une des femmes devait regarder fixement le soleil, sans fermer les yeux ; à chaque mouvement, occasionné par la douleur, elle recevait un coup de sabre

¹ For the rest of the sentence I must refer the reader to Dr. Sandwith's narrative. *Hekim Bashi*, vol. ii, p. 276.

sur les jambes. Une autre devait conserver dans la main un gros morceau d'amadou allumé jusqu'à son extinction.'

These outrages were committed by the official guardians of life, and honour, and property, acting, as the author is careful to tell us, under regular officers. And when the Lieutenant-Governor in command of the district is appealed to, he does nothing.

On another occasion business took our author away from home, accompanied by his servant. Their route led them across a plain, where they beheld in the distance a number of young women engaged in harvesting. Presently the women were seen flying in all directions. At this sight the Frenchman, with the gallantry of his nation, drove his spurs into his horse, and in a few minutes found himself close to the field where the women had been at work. The flight of the girls was now explained, for on the ground was a beautiful village maiden struggling with a Turk, while two peasants, who turned out to be her father and brother, were supplicating the Turk to leave her alone. 'But the Mussulman would not listen to reason, and was preparing to deliver himself from the importunities of the peasants by violent means, when he caught sight of the stranger, who had leapt his horse into the field and was standing close by. The Turk, on being ordered by the engineer to let the girl go, turned upon him in a rage, and struck at him with his kandjia. The latter endeavoured to avoid the blow by wheeling his horse round, but the weapon caught him below the knee; upon which he drew his revolver and fired, wounding the Mussulman in the shoulder. The Turk, finding himself thus suddenly disabled, gave vent to his rage by plucking out the few hairs which still

remained on the back of his head.' 'But what became of the peasants?' asks M. Bianconi, significantly. 'If the Turk did not die of his wound, depend upon it they had to pay very dearly for the intervention of the Christian Tchelébi.'¹

What a flood of light this single incident alone casts on the condition of the Christians of Bulgaria! Here is a brutal Turk violating a beautiful girl before the very eyes of her father and brother, and they can only 'supplicate him to leave her alone.' 'But they are two to one,' some one will explain; 'why not chastise the ravisher on the spot, and rescue the maiden?' Because he is armed to the teeth, and they are defenceless. 'But if they were not cowards they would have rushed upon the Turk, unarmed as they were, instead of meekly witnessing the dishonour of one who ought to be so dear to them?' A very natural sentiment on the part of a free-born Englishman; not quite so natural on the part of a Bulgarian, into whose soul has entered the iron of five centuries of cruel bondage. He has risen up now and again to avenge his intolerable wrongs and break the yoke of his oppressor. And England, free, gallant, chivalrous England, who taunts the Bulgarian for his cowardice as he writhes in the agony of his despair—what encouragement has she given him in his efforts—most heroic efforts they have sometimes been—to be free? She has too often helped the tyrant to rivet the bonds still more tightly on his quivering limbs. And when his spirit is broken and he is thoroughly cowed, the gallant Major Cox, R.E., admires 'the moral influence' which enables the Turkish Zaptieh to overcome the virtue of the Bulga-

¹ *La Vérité sur La Turquie*, pp. 25, 174-5.

rian woman, while he can feel nothing but scorn for the meek submission of her natural protector. Most of the insurrections attempted at various times by the Christians of Turkey may be traced back to outrages on the women. That which is still smouldering in the Herzegovina owes its origin to this cause. So it has been in Servia, so in Bulgaria. The latter country was the scene of the following tragedy in the year 1841.

The Slaves are by disposition a joyous race, and are wont, at festal seasons, to dance in the open air. Among the dancers on one of these festive occasions was a village beauty of the name of Agapia. Smitten by her charms, the nephew of the Pasha of Nish had her seized and carried off from the merry circle. Having secured her he strove to make a Mahometan of her; for it is a sin and a degradation to a Mussulman to have children by a Giaour. Agapia resisted all efforts to convert her. Other means having failed, she was at last put to the torture. She endured her agony with fortitude, and declined to put an end to it by renouncing Christ for Mahomet. Baffled in their attempts to pervert her faith, her judges—for all this took place by regular process of law before a religious tribunal—hit at last on a device which broke her constancy. They sentenced her to be deflowered, or to embrace Islam. Who shall blame her for having in her anguish chosen the latter alternative?

Meanwhile her distressed father scraped together a tolerable sum of money by selling all that he could call his own; and with the bribe in his hand he went to the Pasha and offered it as a ransom for his Agapia. He was told that she was no longer a Christian, but refused to believe it. To get rid of him the girl herself, who found in the longing to see her father a motive for

self-restraint, was produced. 'Is it true, my Agapia,' said her father, with tears in his eyes, 'that you are no longer a Christian?' The poor girl threw herself into his arms and sobbed, 'O save me, for I wish to remain a Christian.' The unexpected scene was roughly ended by the intervention of the servants, who drove away the bereaved father with blows, and shut his daughter up with a number of other abducted girls who had been seized in the same way, and were reserved for the same fate.

The outrage made a deep impression on the Bulgarians, and they muttered vows of vengeance. Scythes were poor weapons against firearms, and scythes were the only weapons which the Bulgarian peasants possessed. Yet even with their scythes they resolved to strike a blow for the honour of their women. They chose as their leaders two brave men, Miloch and Gavra. These went to Servia, before commencing hostilities, to solicit help from the little Principality which had so heroically, and after so many sacrifices, wrested a certain measure of freedom from the Porte. The Servians, however, were still in the grasp of Turkey, which held possession of all their fortresses, and were powerless; but they supplied the Bulgarians with some arms and ammunition. The latter, however, before venturing on the desperate struggle, made an attempt to get justice by peaceful means. They sent a deputation to the Porte to implore the protection of the Sultan. This was considered a great presumption: two Rayahs daring to bring an accusation against a Turkish Pasha! The delegates were accordingly seized and sent back in chains to the Governor of Nish to be dealt with according to their deserts. The latter would have put them to death. But his greed was a stronger passion

even than his cruelty, and he spared the lives of the delegates in return for a large ransom subscribed among their countrymen. He then wrote a letter to the Porte, which he compelled the Bishop and clergy of Nish to sign, in which it was gravely stated that some of the Christians had attempted an outbreak without any cause whatever. The latter, goaded on beyond endurance, rose at last in real earnest, and gave the Pasha the excuse for which he had been longing and waiting. The Bulgarians fought bravely ; but they had of course no chance against disciplined troops, arrayed against them in overwhelming numbers and with superior weapons. ‘During this time,’ says Ranke, ‘the irregular troops of the Pashas burned more than a hundred and fifty villages between Sophia and Nish, impaling the men, dishonouring the women, and then throwing them into the flames of their burning houses, or carrying them off as slaves. The Bulgarians fled from all parts to the mountains, crying *Shumo !* To the forest ! Let us turn haiduks !’¹ Two thousand mounted men pursued them to their fortresses ; but the haiduks showed themselves worthy of their ancestors, and only some thirty of the proud Spahis escaped out of their hands.’

¹ *I.e.* brigands. But the Christian brigand of the Balkans is a very different person from his namesake of Sicily or Calabria. As a general rule, he is a patriot rather than a brigand. A wrong endured from some Turkish official drives him to the woods, from which he conducts a guerilla warfare against the Government. The Haiduks of the Balkans have always played a conspicuous part in the struggles of the Slaves for freedom. Nor indeed did they limit their aspirations or their prowess to their own race. The tocsin which sounded the war of Greek independence roused the Haiduks in their caverns, and they rushed forward to the fray in Macedonia, in the Morea, and on the classic soil of Athens itself. It was before a final charge of the impetuous Haiduks that the Acropolis at last was taken.

These atrocities, quite as bad as those of Batak, took place in 1841, two years after the publication of the Hatti-cherif of Gulhané, the provisions of which, Musurus Pasha has recently assured the British public, abolished impalement and other tortures. The Great Powers of course remonstrated; the Porte of course regretted the atrocities *committed by the Haiduks*, and was deeply moved to learn that Bulgarian girls 'had been carried off in shoals and sold in Albania.' It promised immediate redress, and sent a Commission 'to inquire into the grief of the insurgents and to rectify them.' The Commission went and returned; but so did not the 'shoals' of Bulgarian maidens who had been sold into slavery.

The reader will perhaps now understand, better than he did before, the scene witnessed by Bianconi in a Bulgarian harvest field. If the father and brother of the girl had been able to use force in her defence and drive off her assailant, the latter would certainly have speedily avenged himself in one or other of the ways open to him through open violence or false accusation.¹ This it is, even more than the lack of arms, which makes the Rayah so helpless. Feeling himself to be an outlaw, without possibility of redress against the meanest Turk, he submits to the immediate wrong rather than brave a worse by resistance.

Nor must it be forgotten that these outrages on female honour are directly encouraged by the Turkish Government. A Mussulman is exempted from military service who converts a Christian woman to Islam.

'There is another abuse,' says Consul-General Longworth, who seldom lets slip an opportunity of palliating

¹ See pp. 30-32.

the misconduct of Turkish officials, 'which calls urgently for protection: I mean the forcible abduction of Christian girls by Mahometans. Much has been said in extenuation of this practice of abduction,' and Mr. Longworth accordingly goes on to say this 'much.' 'It is an old custom of those wild districts.' As if that made it more tolerable. All the sufferings of the Rayahs are due to 'old customs'—customs as old as the rule of the Turk, and which will only end when that ends. Then parents, 'by delaying to give' their daughters in marriage at an early age, 'indirectly bring this misfortune on themselves'! A novel view of parental responsibility certainly. The Consul-General pulls himself up, however, in his enumeration of extenuating circumstances, as if it had suddenly occurred to him that he was not now engaged in the congenial task of bullying Rayahs or lecturing Servian politicians, but in the duty of writing a despatch which might possibly be criticised in an assembly not likely to be intimidated by the lofty bearing of even a Consul-General. And so Consul-General Longworth appends the following rider to his list of extenuating circumstances:—'But these palliatives, and others of the kind, which may be urged, are, I think, beside the question, which is simply if seduction and violence have been employed in removing girls from the roof and protection of their parents. But instead of putting it to this issue, it has been the rule to force the party to appear before the tribunal which rejects Christian evidence, and to dispose of the affair summarily, by compelling her to declare herself a Christian or a Mahometan.'¹ We have seen how it fared with poor Agapia, 'the Lucretia of

¹ Consular Reports of 1860, p. 21.

Bulgaria,' as Ranke calls her, before one of these tribunals.

But the real culprit in this, as in most outrages, is the Turkish Government. Mr. Consul Abbott shall tell us how. 'Generally speaking,' he says, writing from Monastir, 'in the conversion of females, it is not the effect of religious enthusiasm ; it proceeds from worldly causes, such as love, or exemption from military conscription. A custom prevails here to exempt from military conscription a Mussulman young man who elopes with a Christian girl, and whom he converts to his faith. This being a meritorious act for his religion, it entitles him, as a reward, to be freed from military service.'¹

Let no one be deceived by such terms as 'elopes' or 'converts to the faith.' Elopement means what Consular-General Longworth calls 'forcible abduction ;' and as to conversion to the Mahometan faith, the victim of Turkish lust has no choice. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred she has no chance of bringing her case before the tribunals at all, and in the hundredth case her evidence as a Christian is not received. If, in the frenzy of her despair, she proclaims herself a Mahometan, as Agapia did, either to escape immediate outrage or to obtain a hearing, there is of course an end to the matter. She is carried to her ravisher's harem and remains his lawful prey, while he is commended and rewarded for having made a convert to Islam.

Now let the reader consider what this means. It means, in plain language, that the Turkish Government puts a premium on the violation of Christian female

¹ Consular Reports of 1860, p. 7.

chastity. Yet a number of well-meaning people among us, who seem to be sane on other points, keep dinning into our ears their absurd assurances that Russia is as bad and barbarous a government as that of Turkey. If Russia were to pass a law exempting from military service the violators of Roman Catholic girls in Poland, what would they say of her? Would they consider a Polish insurrection unjustifiable? Would they seek for its cause in the ambitious intrigues of one of the Great Powers, or in the occult schemes of Secret Societies? Would they not, on the contrary, laugh all such explanations to scorn, and ridicule the idea of assigning to recondite causes phenomena whose cause lay on the surface? But it is proverbially hard 'to see ourselves as others see us;' and those who cannot understand that the government of Russia, even granting the strict accuracy of all the wild accusations lately made against it, is separated from that of Turkey by a moral gulf which cannot be passed, belong to a class of controversialists on whom rational arguments are thrown away.

Je ne vous aime pas, Hylas ;
Je n'en saurois dire la cause ;
Je sais seulement une chose ;
C'est que je ne vous aime pas.

Conclusions arrived at after this fashion are obviously impervious to syllogisms.

And now I think I may pass on to the next head of my indictment against Turkey.

SECTION III.

SECURITY FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

NEXT to security for life and honour stands in importance the enjoyment of security for the free exercise of the various duties of religion ; and to no class of men is this boon so precious as to the poor and the oppressed. Others may find, if not solace, at least distraction and oblivion in a thousand different ways. But distraction and oblivion are not possible to the Rayah of Turkey. All those things which make human life bright and pleasant to others are poisoned to him by the uncertain tenure on which he holds them. No better description of his misery can be given than that in which the great Prophet of Israel so vividly foretold the doom of his people when scattered, for their sins, among the nations of the earth. ‘The Lord shall give thee a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind : and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee ; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life. In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even ! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning ! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.’ Such is the lot of the Rayah ; not in the land of strangers, however, and not for his own sins, but in the home of his fathers and for the sake of some supposed ‘interests’ with which he has no concern. ‘Art thou still our Czar?’ cried the Rayahs of Servia in an address to the Sultan, when they rose to break the yoke of their oppressors or to perish in the effort. ‘Art thou still our Czar? then come and

free us from those evil doers. Or if thou wilt not save us, at least tell us so; that we may decide whether to flee to the mountains and forests, or to seek in the rivers a termination to our miserable existence.' That was the cry seventy-two years ago, and the same cry still ascends from the Rayahs who are yet in bondage; no longer, indeed, addressed to the Sultan, since appeals to him are all in vain, but to the Great Powers by whose grace the Sultan reigns and his minions oppress. 'Surely,' said the Herzegovina insurgents last year in their pathetic appeal to the Signatories to the Treaty of Paris, 'the poor people here are entitled to compassion from those who have feelings of humanity, and to some effort to assist them in their deplorable state—in their opprobrious servitude; where the cry is continually heard—"O Lord, send us our death!"' ¹

It is in circumstances like these that the consolations of religion are so soothing and so sustaining, and the 'sorrow's crown of sorrow' of the Rayah is that his oppressors have turned even the ministers of his religion into instruments of torture against him. In the beginning of the War of Independence in Greece the Greek Patriarch was first made to fulminate an anathema against the insurgents, and then put to death by the Turks. So now the Greek Patriarch has thrown whatever influences he possesses into the scale of the Turk against the Christian; and the Armenian Patriarch has not been slow to follow his example. Seldom has the world witnessed a more cynical display of impudent mendacity than the latter has made in the Address which he lately published with the view of

¹ Parl. Papers, No. ii. p. 34.

damaging the efforts made by the Conference at Constantinople to ameliorate the condition of the Christians of Turkey. Here is a specimen :—

‘The Bulgarian nation occupies three different territories, subject to three distinct Governments, *and the whole world knows that the Armenians of Turkey are by far the happiest, and that if a prayer had to be addressed to the Conference, it should be for the amelioration of the fate of the Armenians of Russia.*’¹

Let us contrast with this the accounts given by the Armenians themselves in two separate documents which are now lying before me. The first is a ‘Memorandum on the actual situation of the Armenians and their future, respectfully addressed to the Chancellors of the Great Powers.’ Very different is this picture from the rosy fictions of the Armenian Patriarch. Like the Bulgarians, the Armenians have made wonderful efforts to improve themselves. They have established and maintained churches, convents and hospitals, ‘and above all, that which appears to them especially worthy of solicitude, schools.’ The difficulties in their path, however, are enormous. ‘They are constantly exposed to outrages of every sort. They are in the midst of a savage people who live on rapine, with the connivance of the local authorities.’

‘Not a day passes but peaceable and laborious Armenian inhabitants are molested in their religion, their liberty, their honour, or their property. Fields are unlawfully seized; sacrileges are committed in the churches and convents; women and children are converted by force to Islamism; acts of incendiarism, brigandage, violation, assassination are constantly com-

¹ See *Times* of Jan. 18. Correspondent’s letter from Pera.

mitted. The Turks, the Kurds, and the Avchars, who have lately been joined by the Circassians, rule in some places as absolute masters. . . . Under the most futile pretexts their (the Armenians') harvests are destroyed, their villages burned, and the inhabitants driven away by sword and gun. Thus anarchy may be said to exist permanently in Armenia. The local authorities rarely interfere, though complaints are continually addressed to them. The right of bearing arms, moreover, is only allowed to the Mahommedans ; and these nomadic hordes, who for the most part pay no tribute and are subjected to no law, carry openly, in presence of the authorities, those weapons which are their principal means of existence. If an Armenian should appeal to the Courts of Law, unless he is provided with Mussulman witnesses, as the Sacred Law ordains, he can never gain his cause. But a Mussulman cannot, without offending against the Koran, be a witness against a coreligionist. So that the result is a total denial of justice.'¹

Yet the Armenian Patriarch assures the public of Constantinople and of Europe that 'the whole world knows that the Armenians of Turkey are by far the happiest, and that if a prayer had to be addressed to the Conference, it should be for the amelioration of the Armenians of Russia.'

I take it that the Armenians of Russia themselves are the best judges as to that, and here is what they say :—

'The Armenians of Russia, who were sunk in the deepest ignorance some forty years ago, now exhibit wonderful moral and material progress. The Arme-

¹ *Mémoire sur la Situation actuelle des Arméniens et sur leur Avenir*, pp. 5-6.

nian population in Russia, which in 1830, according to a census made in that year, numbered only 350,000, has now reached over 800,000. Agricultural and industrial arts flourish among them; schools are being built and increasing; the country, which in 1840 had no newspapers, now possesses four or five in the Armenian language; the people are daily growing richer, and the numbers of pupils who pass through Russian gymnasiums are rapidly increasing. Although the Armenians in the Caucasus are exempted from conscription, there are many who volunteer into the Russian army, and get quickly promoted to the highest ranks, on account of their intelligence and their courage.¹ There are now as many as twenty-six generals of Armenian birth in the Russian army.

‘Whilst formerly the darkest ignorance prevailed at Etchmiadzin, now the present Catholicos has built a spacious school, with rich endowments, and its curriculum of studies promises well. . . . In these districts the Armenians show great energy of character, which exhibits itself in their newspapers. Lately one of these, the *Meshag* (*Agriculturalist*), published in Tiflis, invited the Armenians (under Turkish rule) to rebellion, and condemned their inaction in contemptuous terms, drawing a faithful but terrible picture of the oppression of the Armenians of Turkey, and concluded by saying, “If you cannot give your life for your liberty, come over to us.” That the material condition of Russian Armenia is *incomparably better than that of Turkey is an undeniable fact*. Whilst in Turkey there are no roads, in that part of Armenia which belongs to Russia, high-roads, railways, bridges, and

¹ The general in command of the Army of the Caucasus at this moment is, I believe, an Armenian.

public buildings abound, *and there is every security for life and property.*'¹

It is unnecessary to offer any further refutation of the Armenian Patriarch's audacious assertion 'that if a prayer had to be addressed to the Conference, it should be for the amelioration of the Armenians of Russia.'²

¹ Armenians and the Eastern Question, p. 6.

² The Bulgarian Exarch, I am happy to observe, has declined to follow the ignominious example set him by his Orthodox and Armenian brethren. He has refused hitherto, as the following quotation will show, to prostitute his conscience at the bidding of the Porte:—

'A few days since four Bulgarians, three *employés* in the pay of the Government, and the fourth an *ex-dimier*, or collector of tithes, who owes £10,000 (Turkish) to the Government for embezzlement of public money due to the Treasury, called upon the Exarch at his official residence at Orta-Keui, two miles from Constantinople. They were told that the Exarch was ill and away at his private residence. They then addressed two of the archbishops who were in charge of the Exarchate, and bade them, under menace of being denounced as traitors if they refused, to sign a petition, which I subjoin at the end of this letter, in which the Bulgarians are described as praying for deliverance from the reforms proposed in their behalf by the European Powers. The two archbishops answered that they did not consider themselves authorised to act in the name of the Exarch in a matter of such great importance, nor to append their names to the document before the Exarch had given his signature. The four Bulgarian agents of the Government then proceeded to the Exarch's private residence, where he was ill in bed, and forced themselves into his presence in spite of the servants and friends in attendance, and to him again they preferred their request that he should sign the petition. The Exarch, however, pleaded his indisposition, and firmly refused to sign a document which, he said, "was repugnant to all his principles and to his conscience."

'From this individual case it will be easy to argue the pressure which the Turkish Government puts on the inhabitants of Bulgaria, as well as on the Greeks and other Christians of the different Provinces, to wrest from them a declaration of loyalty which would belie their real feelings.

Here, then, we have a glaring and cruel infringement of religious liberty. Turkey has forced the clergy of different Christian communities in the Empire to become the instruments of her iniquitous treatment of their flocks. 'Regarding the clergy merely as government tools,' says the well-informed M. Cyprien Robert, 'the Turks sell the dignities of the Church to the highest bidder; and the purchasers think of nothing but how they may reimburse themselves by squeezing as much money as possible out of their flocks. The prelate who has bought his see forces the *papas* (parish priest)

'The following is the petition:—

"Les chefs spirituels et les notables bulgares, parlant au nom du peuple bulgare, expriment leurs regrets touchant la réunion de la Conférence, qui aurait pris pour prétexte certains massacres commis au préjudice de la population bulgare par les Mussulmans, mais dont la véritable cause ont (sic) été quelques vagabonds et certains abus de l'administration actuelle, pour s'occuper de l'élaboration d'un projet de réformes à appliquer dans les provinces bulgares; ils déclarent que ces prétextes manquent de fondement, puisque le peuple bulgare n'a qu'à se louer du voisinage de la population Mussulmane et de la domination turque, ne devant, du reste, qu'au Gouvernement turc d'avoir conservé intacte jusqu'à présent sa religion et sa nationalité: aussi en même temps qu'ils remplissent leur devoir d'exprimer au Gouvernement leurs sentiments de reconnaissance et de dévouement à l'occasion de la promulgation de la Constitution qui est appelée à faire disparaître toutes sortes d'anomalies dans l'administration, il ne peuvent s'empêcher de faire savoir qu'ils considèrent comme tout-à-fait superflus les soins des étrangers et l'occupation de quelques provinces que ce soit par des armées étrangères que ceux-ci exigent comme une garantie pour la mise en exécution des réformes."

'One only needs observe the absence of all full stops in the above long sentence to feel sure that the petition was originally written in the Turkish language, an intrinsic proof that it was drawn up in obedience to Turkish views, and, probably, under immediate Turkish dictation.'

Letter of *Times* Special Correspondent, dated 'Pera, Jan. 8.'
See *Times* of Jan. 18.

to buy his benefice.' In Bulgaria these bishops were foreigners, and could not speak a word of the language of the people whom they were sent to rule. True, the parish priests and monks have always remained natives; but the policy of the Porte, energizing through the hierarchy, has always been to keep the priesthood and the monks in a state of ignorance; and the episcopal thunders have only been too ready to fall on the head of any Bulgarian priest who has been weak enough to yield to the prejudice of patriotism. By these means, and also by the grants of certain exemptions, a number of priests were gained over, some thirty years ago, to the policy of the Patriarch. The succeeding generation of priests, however, began, one by one, to set their faces against this debasing state of things, till at last they came to the conclusion that the first step towards their freedom was to declare themselves independent of the Greek Patriarch; acknowledging indeed his ecclesiastical primacy, but repudiating his active interference in their internal affairs. In its initial stages the Bulgarian schism was, like our own Reformation, rather a political than a religious movement. The most enlightened among the Bulgarian clergy and laity saw that there was no hope of emancipation while the most important and influential moiety of the clergy were mere puppets in the hands of the Pashas.

This, however, is but one aspect of the manner in which the Christians of Turkey are harassed in their religion. I shall therefore, under the guidance of her Majesty's Consuls, introduce the reader to a few more phases of the question.

'The Christians,' says Consul Abbott, 'have to pay a fine of about 3,000 piastres for the firman authorising

them to construct a church. If more than that sum is expended [which is almost universally the case,], it is owing to the dishonesty of the Turkish Commissioners sent on the spot to measure the ground and point out the proportions of the edifice, who extort bribes from the Christians, in order that in their report to the Pasha they should raise no objections as to the building of that particular church. Christians, moreover, are not allowed to have bells in their churches.’¹

‘Liberty of worship,’ says Vice-Consul Maling, ‘is certainly allowed within certain limits, but the practice of those external observances and ceremonies to which Eastern Christians attach such weight, is, owing to the fiercely sectarian prejudices and brutality of the Mussulman section of the population, the reverse of free. Ceremonial and even funeral processions are often molested, and but for the forbearing spirit of the Christians, dictated by their sense of helplessness before the law, very grave excesses would ensue. It is not alleged that the authorities incite such expressions of intolerance, but as they never repress them, nor punish the perpetrators, it seems not unnatural to conclude that they regard them approvingly.

‘The use of church bells, to which the Christians particularly cling, is never allowed where mixed creeds congregate. The liberty to build churches, sometimes without any shadow of reasonable pretext altogether refused, always encounters immense difficulties where the mixed races dwell in proximity. The never-wanting opposition of the Mussulman section causes the negotiation to be prolonged over years; and notwithstanding that Government expressly disclaims all fees

¹ Consular Reports of 1860, p. 5.

on the grant, the costs of obtaining it form a preliminary outlay out of all proportion to the undertaking.

‘Towards the erection of such merely elementary schools as are to be found in the district opposition is not made; but the lay teachers, particularly if they have qualified in Greece, are subjected to vexatious persecution. The authorities evidently seek to confine education to the care of the low and illiterate priesthood. . . . It is customary to grant pardons to criminals capitally convicted on condition of embracing Islamism; but Christians invariably spurn such terms.

‘Between members of the two creeds the amenities of daily intercourse are not softened or altered in the least. The grossest and most galling terms of abuse are habitually addressed to the Christian with absolute impunity, the very authorities being in this respect the worst offenders. In the councils and seats of justice there is no form of abuse of which the Turkish language, so pre-eminently rich therein, is capable, however gross, disgusting, and insulting to his faith, which is not openly and hourly applied to the hated and despised “Ghiaour” by the judges and authorities of the land. Christian subjects of the Porte, except in a case which scarcely establishes a principle, have not been admitted at any time to offices of emolument in the local administration. From the Caimakam or Lieutenant-Governor to policemen, customs watchers, and telegram porters, none but Mussulmans are holders of office. A single exception is the appointment of a Christian as a telegraph clerk. In this instance, it seems, the efficiency of the service is made paramount to sectarian considerations. The public schools and charit-

able foundations are without exception closed to the Christians.’¹

Vice-Consul Sandwith writes from Cyprus :—

‘The clause engaging that the free exercise of his religion shall be permitted to everyone is also far from being carried out. There exist here scattered throughout the island some 1,500 persons who are Mussulmans in name only, some of whom apostatized from Christianity in order to save their lives during the Greek revolution, when a reign of terror prevailed here; while others are the offspring of the illicit amours of Greeks and Mussulmans who are always forced to adopt the religion of the dominant race. Some of the latter are *bonâ fide* Mussulmans; but a great many are Christians at heart, but are obliged publicly to acknowledge the Prophet, and can only secretly testify their adherence to Christianity. There can be no doubt that if there was a perfect toleration in religion, these persons would gladly emancipate themselves from the thralldom of their position.’²

Consul-General Sir A. Kemball writes from Bagdad that ‘Christians are of course exposed to the aversion and contempt which are inculcated by the Koran.’³

In a Blue Book on ‘Religious Persecution in Turkey,’ published in 1875, I find the following facts stated on the authority of her Majesty’s Ambassador and Consuls in Turkey: that the Porte ‘definitively refused’ to permit the establishment of Christian schools; that it prohibited the publication of the Bible in the Turkish language; and that, in direct violation of the Hatti-humayoun, the children not only of Mussul-

¹ Consular Reports of 1867, p. 28.

² *Ibid.*, p. 54.

³ *Ibid.*, part ii. p. 2.

mans, but even of heathen parents, can never be recognized as Christians, even if they have been baptized in infancy: 'The law did not recognize such men as Christians at all, but as Mahomedans'—such is the answer made by the Grand Vizier to the British chargé d'affaires on the 18th of May, 1874; and the latter found, on inquiry, that the Grand Vizier was quite right.¹ Does not this demonstrate the folly of trusting to any promises made by the Turkish Government in Hatts, or Firmans, or Iradés? Over them all is the Sacred Law of Islam, which 'altereth not,' and which, in every case of collision, must inevitably prevail. 'No one shall be constrained to change his religion,' says the Hatti-humayoun. 'You are violating the Hatti-humayoun,' remonstrates her Britannic Majesty's representative at the Porte, 'for you are forcing Christians, by means of cruel tortures and threats of death, to conform to the Koran and attend the mosques.' 'Quite a mistake,' blandly replies the Grand Vizier; 'the persons you speak of are not Christians at all; they are Mussulmans.' 'But I have proof,' urges her Majesty's representative, 'that they were baptized as Christians in their infancy.' 'That proves nothing at all,' rejoins his Highness, 'for by the law of Turkey the children of non-Christian parents can never become Christians.' 'That is an evasion of the Hatti-humayoun,' retorts the chargé d'affaires, 'for it promises complete religious liberty to all the Sultan's subjects.' The Grand Vizier shrugs his shoulders at the obtuseness of the British intellect, and explains that any interpretation of the Hatti-humayoun which would bring it in collision with the law of the Empire must of course be a wrong interpretation.

¹ Religious Persecution in Turkey, pp. 27, 40, 49, 54.

This is an accurate epitome of despatches, which extend over several months, and which throw an exceedingly instructive light on the meaning of religious toleration as understood in Turkey. Were it not for its detestable immorality, one could almost admire the perfection to which the Turkish Government has brought the art of lying. Even the much lauded Hatti-humayoun takes away with one hand some of the most precious boons which it bestows with the other. The Hatti-cherif of Gulhané promised full and entire liberty, and the Hatti-humayoun 'confirmed and consolidated' those promises. Nor was this all. In order to assure Europe that the Porte was really about to turn over a new leaf at last, and to reduce its promises to practice, Fuad Pasha addressed a solemn document to the Great Powers, in which he says:— 'The Imperial Firman of February 18, 1856, is only the confirmation and development of the Act of Gulhané, which solemnly decreed the *régime* of equality and opened the era of reform in the Ottoman Empire. . . . But the Act of Gulhané was by itself merely the acknowledgment of a right and the promise of a reform which might remain barren. The time has come for converting promises into facts—in other words, for introducing them into the institutions of the country.'¹

This pledge is supposed to have been fulfilled, at least in words, by the Hatti-humayoun; but it is a mistake. The promise of religious liberty is so craftily worded that it may easily be evaded without involving a legal breach of faith. For instance:—

¹ Considérations sur l'Exécution du Khatt-i-Humaïoun du 18 Février, 1856. See 'État Présent de l'Empire Ottoman,' p. 243.

‘In the towns, small boroughs, and villages,’ says this famous charter, ‘*where the whole population is of the same religion*, no obstacles may be offered to the repair, *according to their original plan*, of buildings set apart for religious worship, for schools, for hospitals, and for cemeteries.’

Here is a permission which looks liberal enough at the first glance, but which is in fact reduced to a nullity by the two restrictions in italics. The permission is given only in places ‘where the whole population is of the same religion.’ There are very few places in European Turkey answering literally to this description; and the consequence is that in most places churches, schools, hospitals and cemeteries which fall in decay, cannot be repaired. On the other hand, in the few places where the condition is fulfilled the restored building must be on precisely the same plan as the old—the same shape and the same dimensions. The congregation outgrows its church, the pupils their schoolhouse, patients their hospital; and with the growth of population comes the growth of prosperity. No matter. The old accommodation must suffice in size and quality, if the Christians wish to build on the same site. But suppose they prefer to migrate to a new site? Is that possible under the Hatti-humayoun? Certainly; but on two conditions. First, leave must be obtained from the Porte to occupy the new site; secondly, the sanction of the Patriarch must be got for the plans of the new buildings. I have already explained what manner of men these Patriarchs are. The town or village where the new church, or school, or hospital is required, may be hundreds of miles from Constantinople. Thither the plans must be sent through official channels lined with bribes. When the Patriarch

is sufficiently well feed he graciously approves, and then the plans are ready to be submitted to the Sultan for *his* approval. This involves more delay, more finessing, more bribery, besides the regular fee which has to be paid to the Sultan in each case. When there is no hitch, which means when the bribes have been sufficient, the plans may get back to the place from which they started in the course of six months. They may, on the other hand, be kept at Constantinople for two or three years; and very often they never return at all.

But let us go on with our examination of this remarkable charter of civil and religious equality:—

‘Each community, in a locality where there is no other denomination, shall be free from every species of restraint as regards the public exercise of its religion.’

It follows, of course, that in all localities where religions are mixed—either Christians with Christians or Christians with Mahometans—the ordinary restrictions prescribed by the Koran are in force. Among these restrictions are the following:—

‘It is not lawful for Christians or Jews to build churches or convents in our land, nor for the Magii to build temples for fire-worship. They are also forbidden to trade in wine or swine. They are allowed to repair old churches which are in ruins, but they must do this with the old material, in the same place, and without any additions. It is not lawful for them to sound bells, except inside of their churches, and so gently that they shall not be heard outside. They are not allowed to dwell among Moslems in the same city; but they must live in a special quarter by themselves, where no Moslems reside. Should any of them purchase a house in the Moslem quarter, he cannot be

permitted to occupy it, but must sell it.' Moreover, the Christian 'must be distinguished from the Moslem by his dress, the animal he rides, and its saddle. He is not allowed to ride upon horses or camels, but he may ride upon donkeys and mules. He is not permitted to use arms or to wear them. In public he must always wear the *kosteef* (a narrow strip outside his dress) to distinguish him from the Moslems. He is not allowed even to ride on a donkey except in case of necessity, and then he must use a coarse cushion in place of a saddle, and he must dismount whenever he meets Moslems. . . . His dress must not be of rich cloth, such as silk or fine wool. His turban must be large, and of coarse black cotton. His shoes also must be of the coarsest quality to mark his degradation. His garments must be short, with the pockets on the breast, like those of a woman. He is forbidden to sit down in the presence of a Moslem who is standing. . . . A Christian woman or female child must keep away from Moslems in the street and in the bath. They must walk on the side of the way to give room for the Moslem woman in the middle. The Christian must have a sign on his gate, so that beggars may not say, "God bless you." He must walk in the narrowest part of the way when he meets a Moslem. He must pay the tribute standing while the collector sits. When the collector takes the tribute from him he should treat him very harshly, as by shaking him, beating him on the breast, or even dragging him on the ground; and should say to him at the same time, "Give the tribute, O Dsimmi; O enemy of Allah," and this he shall do in order to degrade and disgrace him. And if he should refuse to pay the tribute, some say that he should be imprisoned and forced to pay; but the

majority of law authorities agree that he must be put to the sword or made a slave. Should he curse the Prophet (on whom be peace), he is to be punished according to his crime ; but should he do it openly and often, he must be burnt alive.'

I have quoted this somewhat long passage because it is commonly supposed that Mussulmans in general, and Turks in particular, are remarkable for their toleration. A public man, whose opinions are generally weighty, Sir George Campbell, commits himself to the following assertions :—' Vanquished people who do not accept Mahommedanism are not admitted to the same privileges as Mahommedans, but they are, or by law ought to be, tolerated or protected in the free exercise of their own religion. . . . Some great Mahommedan Powers have exhibited what may be called almost the perfection of religious toleration—witness both the Moguls in India and the Turks in Europe.' In another passage he questions the alleged fanaticism of the Turks. ' How do they show it ? ' he asks. And answering his own question, he replies, ' Certainly not by intolerance towards Christians. I have said already that they are most remarkable for tolerance ; and again I say that in no other country in the world has a ruling race been more constantly tolerant towards subjects professing a religion different from their own. Not only have the Christians the most perfect freedom of religion and religious worship, but they are allowed to conduct their ceremonies, processions, &c., in public with an unrestrained freedom which is perfectly astonishing. I am sure that in scarcely any, if any, country in Christian Europe is there such freedom. I believe that there was some rule against the Christians building spires to their churches in rivalry of the

minarets, but if so, that was the only mark of inferiority.' ¹

I own myself fairly astonished at this unqualified laudation of Turkish toleration. Sir George gives no authorities, and both my experience and my authorities are point blank against him. He makes two statements : first, that the Turkish law prescribes toleration ; secondly, that both by law and in practice the Christian subjects of Turkey enjoy 'almost the perfection of religious toleration.' Toleration is a relative term, and Sir George Campbell has not defined the sense in which he uses it. But I venture to assert, and undertake to prove, that, in the sense in which the word is used in England, religious toleration does not so much as exist in Turkey. I have, in fact, produced evidence enough already to establish that proposition. But it is exceedingly hard to root up prejudices which have grown to be inveterate, and this particular prejudice is so mischievous, especially when resting on the authority of men like Sir George Campbell, that I must deal with it at greater length than would otherwise be necessary. In a subsequent chapter I shall examine the question of religious toleration generally in relation to Mahometanism. Here I shall confine myself to the exhibition of it afforded under Turkish rule.

And first as to the law. The passage which I have quoted above, prescribing the restrictions and degradation to be put upon the Christians, is taken from the *Multeka-ul-Abhur* (The Meeting of the Two Seas). But what is the *Multeka*? It is difficult to describe it even by comparing it with the most authoritative of our text-books on law. To compare it with Blackstone would give no idea at all of its authority in Turkish Courts of

¹ A Recent View of Turkey, pp. 36, 52-3.

Law. It belongs to the class of sacred books, and stands next in authority to the Koran ; or rather, it is the authorised interpreter of the Koran, so that in all disputed passages the Multeka must be consulted ; and then *causa finita est*. ‘ All points respecting dogmas, divine worship, morals, civil and political law, &c., are so immutably settled in this work as to dispense with all future glosses and interpretation.’ It is, in fact, ‘ regarded as an authority without appeal.’¹ It is a compilation in two folio volumes, written originally in Arabic, and translated into Turkish under Sultans Ibrahim I. and Mohammed II. It was revised in 1824 by order of the Porte, and a new edition, bearing the official government stamp, was published in 1856, soon after the promulgation of the Hatti-humayoun. It is the sole authority of the Turkish judges and Turkish lawyers. Their minds are saturated with its principles and precepts. In its atmosphere they may be said to live, and move, and have their being. I have given the reader an average specimen of its teaching on religious toleration, and, taking it altogether, it may be described as the most ferocious display of bigotry that has ever disgraced the judicial system of any government calling itself civilized. The Spanish Inquisition does not approach it in savage intolerance. Sir George Campbell could not have heard of the Multeka when he penned his panegyric on the Turkish Government for ‘ exhibiting what may be called almost the perfection of religious toleration.’

The Multeka, then, is the universal code of Turkish law, to which every Mussulman must bow from the Sultan downwards, and from whose decrees there is and can be no appeal. And the skill of Turkish

¹ Ubicini's *Lettres sur la Turquie*, vol. i. p. 139.

diplomacy consists in reconciling the largest measures of reform with the doctrines and precepts of the Multeka. This it does by such ambidexterous use of language as shall enable a Turkish official to drive the proverbial 'coach-and-six' through the finest Hatt that ever issued from the Sublime Porte. Let me quote again, by way of illustration, a clause in the Hatti-humayoun to which I have already referred:—'Each community, in localities where there are no other religious denominations, shall be free from every species of restraint as regards the public exercise of its religion.'

But this is to legislate for Utopia; for there is hardly any locality in Turkey answering literally to this description; and a Turkish official, with that low cunning for which the race is proverbial, would press the literal language of the clause. The result is that, as regards religious toleration, the specious promises of the Hatti-humayoun leave the Christians precisely where they were before—that is, under the tender mercies of the Sacred Law as laid down in the Multeka. This it is which makes all projects of reform in Turkey such utter and absurd abortions. They are not intended to revolutionise Turkey—which is what in words they aim at—but to bamboozle Europe. And in this they have succeeded most admirably. Midhat Pasha's Constitution is as great a farce as any of its predecessors; but the pro-Turkish portion of the London press had not humour enough to see the joke. The lions of the *Pall Mall Gazette* laid their heads confidently on the bosom of the *Daily Telegraph* and purred their satisfaction at the patriotic language of their old *bête noir*; while the *Standard* rebuked the Liberals severely for laughing Midhat the Reformer to scorn. That

worthy's Constitution reminds me of a story told, I think, by Sherard Osborne, of the first Japanese attempt at the construction of a steamer. That shrewd government sent a clever artist to take an accurate sketch of an English steamer lying in harbour. The sketch was carefully made, and the first Japanese steamer was laid on the stocks. In due time it was launched, with funnel and paddle-boxes complete, and regularly equipped with a crew. Then a fire was lit in a great stove below, and a black volume of smoke issued from the funnel. But to the perplexity of the Japanese, the paddle-wheels, which were an exact imitation of the English ones, would not move, and the steamer refused to budge. For it had no engines!

Such will be the fate of Midhat Pasha's Constitution. It is an amusing imitation of a French model, with here and there a bit of plagiarism from England. But it lies under the fatal defect of its Japanese prototype, with this difference that Midhat's clever handywork was never intended to move. It is furnished with a few clever devices which completely nullify its liberal promises.

But it may be replied: 'The passage which you have quoted from the *Multeka* is certainly about as savage an exhibition of intolerance as it is possible to imagine. But in Turkey, as elsewhere, atrocious laws may remain unrepealed which have ceased to be operative in practice.'

The objection is plausible, but not to the point. The *Multeka* is not like a law on the statute-book of a civilized country, which has remained unrepealed simply because it has long been obsolete and forgotten. On the first manifestation of its vitality such a law would instantly be abolished, like the law sanctioning Wager of Battle in England, when it was appealed to

half a century ago. But the Multeka is not a law of this sort. It is not a law which one sovereign or government may pass and another sovereign or government may repeal. It is to Turkey what the Law of Moses was to Israel, the foundation and sanction on which the whole system, religious, political, and social, rests. The Multeka is in fact Islam, and to repeal the one is to abolish the other. The law of the Multeka has always been the law of Islam everywhere, in Bagdad and Hindustan, in Sicily and Spain, just as much as in Turkey. The circumstances of different countries may modify its application in unimportant details; but in its main features it has always prevailed wherever a Mussulman Power has wielded an independent sway. And it prevails in Turkey now in exact proportion to the degree in which Turkey finds itself independent. Turkey, it is true, has just defied Europe and displayed an independence which is probably the prelude to its ruin. Yet, for all that, it is absurd to talk of the independence of Turkey. There are many things which Turkey would do, but does not, because she dreads the interference of a foreign Power. In fact, the chief duty of the foreign consuls and ambassadors in Turkey is to watch over the Christian subjects of Turkey. No petty principality in Europe is exposed to the bullying and humiliation which the Sublime Porte is obliged to endure, with deep resentment no doubt, but with Oriental dissimulation. Turkey is thus under pressure, and the vitality of the Multeka is nicely adjusted to the degree of pressure which keeps it down. It asserts itself in exact proportion to the weight which lies upon it. That weight is greatest at Constantinople, and diminishes as you recede from the capital, till it reaches the vanishing point in parts of the interior of the

empire. When one of those massacres takes place which are periodical in Turkey, it is because the pressure is removed which keeps the law of the Multeka in check. Midhat Pasha, wishing to 'diminish' the population¹ in Bulgaria and to terrorise the survivors, removed the pressure, and the Bulgarian horrors followed naturally from the uncontrolled execution of the precepts of the Multeka under the direction of Chefket Pasha, the trusted agent of Midhat Pasha.¹

The intolerance of Turkey is thus seen to belong to

¹ 'From what I can make out, I am really inclined to think that the object at this moment, in the lately disturbed district of Tirnova, is to diminish the number of Bulgarians as much as possible, for it is said that the Circassians seem to be doing all this with the apparent connivance of the authorities'—Despatch of Consul Reade in Correspondence respecting the affairs of Turkey in 1876, No. 3, p. 333.

'I have just heard the affair of Chevket Pasha, at Boyadjik, on the other side of the Balkans, as related by a Prussian engineer in the Government (Turkish) service here (at Rustchuk), who was close to the spot when it took place, and whose statement almost entirely agrees with that given in the *Daily News* of the 8th instant. This officer, knowing the real facts of the case, says he never was so thunderstruck as when he heard that Chevket Pasha had been decorated and promoted. He further says, he saw the Commission sent afterwards by the Porte to investigate the matter, who said to him that the whole of the villagers had not been massacred, but only 700 (out of 1,300). The Commission said very little else, and appeared extremely passive, which the engineer said he did not wonder at, from what he had found. After this the engineer returned to Shumla in company with a high Ottoman functionary whom he did not wish to name, and who on the way and in his presence asked the zaptiehs who accompanied them if they had profited by the rising to diminish the number of Bulgarians. They replied not, as in their district everything had been quite quiet. He then said, "You ought to have done so, and you would have rendered a service to the Government."—*Consul Reade in Parl. Papers of 1876*, No. 5, p. 18. The despatch is dated 'Rustchuk, July 19, 1876.'

the very essence of Islam, and is vigorous or feeble according to circumstances. The Mussulman yields readily to fate, and the ferocious doctrines of the Mul-teka are, for the most part, laid on the shelf in Mahometan countries which have come under the dominion of a non-Mussulman power. It is this circumstance, I suppose, which has misled Sir George Campbell. He finds Mahometanism tolerant in India, and he concludes that this tolerance is the offspring of Mahometan law, whereas it is chiefly the offspring of British domination. I say 'chiefly the offspring' because I have no doubt that there are numbers of Mussulmans in India, like the Bosniacs and Pomaks in Turkey, who have never thoroughly assimilated the anti-human doctrines of Islam—for such they are—into their system. It is the distinction of the Turks that they, of all Mussulmans, have imbibed into the inmost core of their being all that is inhuman and detestable in the Koran and the Sacred Laws founded upon it. So far forth as a Turk inclines towards liberality and toleration he declines from Islam, of which intolerance is an inherent principle. He becomes what would be considered in the Church of Rome under similar circumstances 'a bad Catholic.' The true Moslem must ever remain as he has been described by Mr. Palgrave: 'In Islam, and Islam alone, they lived and moved, and had their being, and Islam, and no other, should or could be, they held, their arbiter or judge.'¹

So much, then, as to the 'law' of Turkey which Sir George Campbell has been misled into thinking so tolerant that he concludes that any instances of intolerance in practice must be violations of the law. They are, on the contrary, the legitimate, or rather the

¹ Essays on Eastern Questions, p. 137.

necessary, fruits of the law of Turkey wherever the Porte is able to reduce its precepts to practice. Some instances of this have been given already, and the following additional ones will show that the degree in which the law of the Multeka is enforced depends entirely on the ability to enforce it.

M. Bianconi, for example, relates the following as falling within his own experience. In the larger towns and villages in the interior of Turkey the Christians are not allowed to build a church near a mosque. The belfry or spire of the church must never surpass in height the minaret of the mosque. Singing in Christian churches must never be loud enough to be heard outside. Bells are not allowed at all, and the only substitute permitted is a piece of wood which the Christian clergy may beat to call the faithful to church. Processions are forbidden, even funeral processions behind the bier of the departed.¹

Consul Calvert, than whom no better informed or more experienced witness could be produced, told Mr. Nassau Senior that in the interior of Turkey 'Christians were not allowed to ride on horses; they were required to wear a peculiar dress. If a Christian met a Turk, even of the lowest class, it was his duty to stand aside with his hands crossed, until the great man, perhaps a porter or beggar, had passed.'² In some districts the houses as well as the garments of the Christians must be of a dull and sombre hue, fit emblem of their social condition.³

Referring to the systematic course of insults to which the Christians are daily exposed, Consul Taylor, writing from Diabekir, says:—

¹ *La Vérité sur la Turquie*, p. 54.

² *Journal kept in Turkey and Greece*, p. 124.

³ *Ranke*, p. 467.

‘Seniority, rank, local and ostensibly official status are all wilfully ignored, and they are invariably placed below the meanest Moslem having the smallest position as scribe in the Medjlis. Out of it the Christians rank after the cawasses and tchibookchees; no one rises for them, no salaam is returned to their salutations, the Moslems thinking it sufficient to acknowledge it by, what is considered here, the ostentatious impertinence and studied insult of a slight jerk of the head. The Moslem Medjlis members, reclining on soft cushions, wile away the tedium of their profitless meetings by indulging in their long pipes and occasionally taking their meals there. The Christian, on the contrary, obliged to be present, has to content himself with the farthest end of a dilapidated bench hardly covered by the thread-bare remains of a miserable carpet, and solace himself with furtive side-whiffs of a partly concealed cigarette. . . . They thus regard the empty honours they have received as a blind for a temporary purpose, or to give a semblance of loyal desire to carry out the stipulations of an unwelcome concession, but altogether useless for the furtherance of any legitimate object they might otherwise advance for the interests of Government or benefit of their co-religionists.’¹

A Greek archbishop, says Vice-Consul Barker, writing from Prevesa, ‘is not allowed to attach his signature but under that of the meanest Turk’ who happens to be a member of one of the Municipal Councils. ‘In the Arta Court his Eminence’s name comes after that of a Turkish barber of a disreputable character.’²

Nor is it in life alone that the intolerance of the

¹ Consular Reports of 1867, part ii. p. 5.

² *Ibid.* part i. p. 7.

Turk is shown; it pursues the Rayah into the grave. Dr. Humphrey Sandwith has published the following form of burial certificate given by the Cadi of Mardin in Asia Minor:—

‘We certify to the priest of the Church of Mary that the impure, putrified, stinking carcase of Sardeh, deceased this day, may be concealed under ground.

‘(Sealed) El Said Mehemed Faizî.

‘A.H. 1271, Rajib 11 (March 29, 1855).’¹

That this was not a capricious exhibition of insolence on the part of a provincial official, but the ordinary form of a burial certificate, is admitted, in a book published last autumn, by M. Ucinini, who is thoroughly familiar with Turkish usages.² Yet the Ottoman Government is believed by many to be the most tolerant in Europe. It is tolerant enough to the quarrels of Christian sects amongst themselves. The more they quarrel, the better the Porte likes it, for it knows that their union is its peril. But it is not tolerant in the sense of allowing its Christian subjects to enjoy the rites of their religion in security and peace. Every kind of humiliation is put upon them for no other reason than that they are Christians. ‘To blaspheme what the poor man holds so dear,’ say the insurgents of Herzegovina, ‘to insult him outrageously, is an action worthy of a

¹ Siege of Kars, p. 173.

² État Présent de l’Empire Ottoman, pp. 6–7: ‘En dépit des ordonnances qui avaient étendu à tous les habitants la dénomination de *tibâ*, “sujets,” l’ancienne distinction entre les moslimin (Musulmans) et les raïas subsistait toujours. Une technologie particulière était employée à l’égard de ces derniers. Les expressions qui pouvaient leur être communes avec les Musulmans étaient, même dans les actes publics, travesties d’une façon injurieuse ou grossière. Le Dr. Sandwith en cite un *exemple bien caractéristique*; c’est le *tezkerèh*, permis d’inhumation.’

true Mussulman, and entitles him to reward in the other world.’¹

In brief, then, the much-vaunted toleration of the Turkish Government comes to this. By the Sacred Law, which is supreme over everything, the profession of Christianity is in itself an offence worthy of death. The Mussulman who embraces Christianity forfeits, *ipso facto*, his life. The non-Mussulmans, with the exception of three classes, may be put summarily to death for no reason at all except the crime of not being Mussulmans; that is to say, non-Mussulmans, viewed generically, are liable to death for not believing in Mahomet and the Koran. From this general sentence of death on the whole non-Mussulman world a concession is made in favour of those who possess Scriptures acknowledged by the Koran to be in a certain degree inspired. These privileged persons are Jews, Samaritans, and Christians; and their privilege amounts to this. Their life is granted to them, as a matter of grace, on condition of their ransoming it at any price which the Mussulman may choose to fix. The ransom always includes a money payment or capitation tax, fixed in each case by the arbitrary will of the Mussulman, and liable to indefinite increase; and also a land tax. But it *may* include anything else, as, for example, the annual tribute of Christian boys which the Sultans for a long time exacted from subject Christian States, for the purpose of recruiting the corps of the Janizaries, and for purposes still more vile. If ‘the people of the book,’ as the so-called privileged portion of non-Mussulman humanity is designated, refuse to submit at once to these terms, the suspended Djihad, or Holy War, is immediately in force against them,

¹ Parl. Papers, No. 2, p. 35.

and they revert to the condition of all other inhabitants of the Dar-ul-harb, or infidel world. If, on the other hand, they submit, they are allowed to live, and also to practise their religion under all the disabilities and marks of degradation and contumely already described. In other words, they are deprived not merely of all security for religious freedom, but of religious freedom in fact. And this is the normal condition of the Christians of Turkey.

SECTION IV.

SECURITY OF PROPERTY.

THE next article in my impeachment of the Turkish Government is the entire absence as to security for property to which its Christian subjects are exposed. And first as to immovable property.

The land question in Turkey is so intricate and varies so much in different districts, that it would require more space than I can give, and more knowledge than I possess, to explain it in all its ramifications and details. My purpose will be sufficiently answered if I can convey to the reader such a general idea of the subject as will enable him to follow the bearings of the evidence which I shall place before him.

The land of Turkey falls under three divisions of property, each of them having peculiarities of tenure belonging to itself. These are the Patrimonial lands, the Domain lands, and the Vacoufs or Mosque property.

Under the title of Patrimonial is included all heritable property in land other than that belonging to the

Domain and the Vacoufs. And it includes Christian as well as Mussulman proprietors, but with an important distinction. On the conquest of the land the whole territory became the property of the conquerors, who took for themselves as much as they cared to possess, and distributed the rest among the dispossessed owners. This allotment was made in the following fashion. The land allotted to the Mussulmans was designated Titheable Property, subject, that is, to a tax of one-tenth of its produce. The lands left in possession of the Christians were called Tributary Property, that is, lands subject to the payment of *kharadj*, which is a twofold tax; the capitation tax, paid by way of ransom for life and liberty, and the manorial tax, which includes both soil and produce.

This distinction is radical and essential. It is enshrined in the *Multeka*, or Sacred Law, and enforced in the *Kánoun*, or Civil Law. *Ubicini* gives the following *fetvah* or legal decision, according to the Sacred Law, delivered by one of the grand muftis:—

‘*Question*.—What is, according to law, the distinction between Titheable and Tributary land?

‘*Answer*.—When the Imaum (or “leader”) conquers a country and divides it amongst his followers, or leaves it in the hands of the inhabitants, *supposing them to have become Mussulmans*, he imposes no tax upon them but the tithe (*aschr*), *i.e.* the tenth of the annual produce. But when the ancient possessors are allowed to retain their property, while still remaining infidels, it must be on condition of their paying the tribute (*kharadj*). A religious meaning is attached to the word *aschr*, which excludes its application to infidels. The tribute is levied either on the soil or on produce. The former is estimated according to extent

of land, the latter according to its fertility, and may amount to from one-eighth to one-half of the produce. This is the division of lands as laid down in the Books of Law.'

The Domain or Crown Lands are divided into nine classes :¹—

1. The domains of which the revenues belong to the *Miri* or public treasury.

2. Waste lands.

3. The private domain of the Sultan.

4. The imperial dues or royalties, consisting in a great measure of confiscations, or inheritance reverting to the crown on the death of individuals who have no legitimate heirs.

5. The dotations of the Sultan Validé or mother of the sultan, and of the princes and princesses of the blood.

6. Fiefs attached to the offices filled by the grand viziers.

7. Fiefs of pashas with two tails.

8. Fiefs assigned to ministers and officers of the palace.

9. Military fiefs granted to spahis² and civil functionaries, and sometimes to private individuals.

The tenure of the last class of fiefs is somewhat curious. Originally they were intended for the two-

¹ Ubicini, i. 256.

² Spahi is literally a horseman, and was originally a generic term for a Turkish soldier. It is a relic of the time when the Turks, like their kinsmen in Central Asia now, were all mounted. The spahis of the present day are, speaking generally, the descendants of the Turkish soldiery to whom as much land as they required was allotted out of the property of the Christians. The word ought really to be written Sipahi, and is etymologically identical with Sepoy.

fold purpose of providing for the defence of the empire and for rewarding military service. The horseman (spahi) who received the fief could claim as his own the produce of the public taxes raised on the lands cultivated by the Mussulman or Christian peasants, over whom he exercised at the same time a seignorial jurisdiction. The peasants, meanwhile, remained the proprietors of the land, but could not bequeath it out of the direct line of succession—at least, without the express permission of the spahi, who also had a right of exacting a fine from the legatee. When a peasant proprietor died without heirs the spahi could not appropriate his inheritance; he was obliged to give it to a neighbouring peasant proprietor. These military fiefs were divided into three classes, according to their extent: the Beyliks, the Ziamets, the Timars. Each fief was required to furnish one horse-soldier for every 3,000 aspers of revenue. Fiefs of the lowest class are reckoned at 210 soldiers, of the next at 300, and of the third, which might be a conquered kingdom or principality, and which was always under a pasha, at 50,000.

We have thus three distinct kinds of landed property to deal with under the head of Patrimonial Lands. We have first that of the Mussulman cultivators of the soil, who are peasant proprietors holding their land on condition of paying the tenth and rendering military service. We have, secondly, the Rayah cultivators of the soil, who are also peasant proprietors on condition of paying the capitation tax, the land tax, and recently the tax for exemption from military service—an exemption in which they have no choice. We have, thirdly, the spahis and other fief-holders, who are entitled to a rent on the land, whether the peasant proprietor be Mussulman or Christian; the difference

being that the Christian is exposed, without redress, to numberless and cruel extortions from which the Mussulman peasant is free, though he too is grievously oppressed.¹

This legislation, however, applies only to land under cultivation or rights of pasturage at the time of the Ottoman conquest. Waste and unenclosed lands which had not been included in the partition at the time of the conquest, or such as have gone out of cultivation since and have been allowed to remain unoccupied and unclaimed, become the property of anyone, Mussulman or not, who reclaims them, or, as the Kanoun expresses it, 'gives back their soul to them.' Also the man who plants a tree in a waste place becomes its owner, as well as of five feet of ground all round it.

But behind all these fiefs and proprietary rights stands the State, which is, after all, the only real proprietor; inasmuch as it may cancel at will all subordinate rights. In theory and strict law, therefore, the Sultan, or rather, the Treasury, which, again, means an oligarchy of corrupt Pashas, retains the direct management of a part of the land of Dar-ul-Islam in his own hands, and portions the rest out to husbandmen who have the usufruct, but not the fee-simple, of the soil. The latter remains always with the State, and possession may be resumed at pleasure.

There is one kind of property in Turkey, however, which is practically, though not theoretically, inalienable. I mean the *Vacouf*, or property of the mosques. *Vacouf* originally meant the land set apart for the mosques in the legal division of a conquered territory; but it gradually came to mean all property belonging

¹ D'Ohsson, *Tableau Général*, vii. p. 372.

to the mosques, whether by donation or otherwise. The ecclesiastical caste is all-powerful in Turkey, and the result is that all property belonging to the mosques is in practice considered inalienable, as being of the nature of a gift made to Almighty God Himself. For the same reason the *Vacouf* is free from taxation, confiscation, and all judicial proceedings.¹ This, however, leaves untouched the fundamental principle of Turkish law, namely, that the State is the real proprietor of the land ; for the *Vacouf* does not imply ownership of the soil, but only the enjoyment of its produce.

One class of mosque property deserves to be noticed, as it is a standing witness to the insecurity of property in Turkey, even when the proprietors are Mussulmans. If the owner of an estate has had the misfortune to incur the resentment or to excite the cupidity of some grasping Pasha, he secures his property by placing it under the protection of a mosque in the following manner. Nominally the property is sold to the mosque ; but what really happens is that the mosque gives the proprietor a sum of money much below the value of the property—perhaps one-tenth—and the proprietor, in return, pays the mosque an annual rental equivalent to about fifteen per cent. on the sum advanced by the latter. The estate is thus secure, not only against confiscation, but against taxation and exactions of any kind. The proprietor, meanwhile, retains the enjoyment of his estate, and even the power of transmitting it to his descendants in the direct line, so long as he continues to pay the stipulated rent. In the event, however, of the proprietor surviving his children or dying without issue, his estate becomes the property of the mosque, in obedience to a dictum of the Sacred

¹ Ubicini, i. 260.

Law which declares that orphans cannot inherit from their grandfather.

This is a contingency which happens not unfrequently, and the result is that the mosque gets possession of the property at about one-tenth of its value, having in the interval received an annual revenue of fifteen per cent. on the purchase-money. In this way three-fourths of the territorial property of Turkey is stated by Ubicini to be at this moment mortgaged to the mosques. This is in addition to the original endowments of the mosques and to subsequent bequests. What a commentary on the security of property and fiscal system of Turkey !

The military fiefs of which I have spoken above have been partly abolished and partly modified in the course of the last half century. The first who attacked them was Sultan Mahmoud ; but in certain parts of the empire they continued to retain their vitality, and cannot be said to be extinct even now. The Beys of Bosnia resisted all attempts at interference, but were finally quelled by Omar Pasha as already related.

The question of these fiefs, however, is only indirectly connected with that which I am now discussing, namely, the kind and degree of security which the Christians of Turkey enjoy in respect to property. First, what is their security as far as the letter of the law is concerned ? Secondly, what is their security in matter of fact ?

In answering the first question we must be careful to keep two facts clearly in our mind. The first fact is, that to the State alone belongs the fee-simple of the land, the occupiers and cultivators having, in the eye of the law, only a life-interest in the property which they occupy or cultivate. They have a right to the produce ;

but the soil itself is merely hired out or let on certain conditions, and may be resumed at will by the Paramount Owner. The Sacred Law, which is supreme over all, from the Sultan downwards, declares as follows:—

‘It is lawful to distribute and apply a portion of the territory of the State in behalf of all just claims on its protection: this consideration alone can render lawful an endowment which is in principle *irregular and unsound*; for the fundamental characteristic and nature of *Vacouf* is a recognition of proprietorship in the man who disposes of it; but the *Imaum, Sultan, or Caliph*, is not the proprietor, he is only the steward of the State territory.’¹

No part of this State territory can be alienated, for it is a gift from God to the True Believers, who are consequently forbidden to bestow it on the infidel. By the law of Turkey therefore even the Mussulman cannot become a proprietor in our Western sense of the word. That many Mussulman landowners do, in matter of fact, derive their properties from a line of ancestors is quite true; but their want of confidence in the security of their tenure is demonstrated by the fact that three-fourths of the private landed property of the Mussulmans of Turkey is under the inviolable protection of the mosques.

The tenure on which the Christian holds his property is naturally much more precarious than that of the Mussulman. And this is the second fact which it is important to bear in mind. It is more precarious for two reasons; first, because it is as a matter of grace and condescension, and not, like the Mussulman, as a matter of right, that he is allowed to occupy land at all; secondly, his enjoyment of his land depends upon his

¹ Ubicini, i. 265.

regular payment of the imposts laid upon him ; from which it follows that he can be legally dispossessed by taxing or otherwise embarrassing him beyond his means. It frequently happens that the Rayah is in this manner deprived of land which he reclaimed from the waste, and thereby made his own in the limited sense of ownership already explained.

Let us now see how the Turkish law in respect to land works in practice.

‘ Christians are permitted by law to possess landed property, but the difficulties opposed to their acquiring are so great that few have dared as yet to face them. As far as the mere purchase goes no difficulties are made. A Christian can buy and take possession ; it is when he has got his land into order, or when the Mussulman who has sold has overcome the pecuniary difficulties which compelled him to sell, that the Christian feels the helplessness of his position and the insincerity of the Government. Steps are then taken by the original proprietor, or some relative of his, to reclaim the land from the Christian, generally on one of the following pleas :—That the original owner not being sole proprietor had no right to sell ; that the ground being “ *meraah* ” or grazing ground could not be sold ; that the deeds of transfer being defective the sale had not been legally made. Under one or other of these pleas the Christian is in nineteen cases out of twenty dispossessed, and he may then deem himself fortunate if he gets back the price he gave. Few, a very few, have been able to obtain justice, but I must say that the majority of these owe their good fortune not to the justice of their cause, but to the influence of some powerful Mussulman.’¹

¹ Consular Reports of 1860, p. 55. Despatch of Consul Zohrab from Bosna-Serai.

No Jesuit, even of the most traditional type, has ever acted more systematically on the principle that faith need not be kept with an infidel than the Turk does. The Turk, in fact, does not consider it possible for a True Believer to be bound by any compact of mutual obligation with a Giaour. When the Giaour happens to be a foreigner who can enforce his rights the Turk submits to fate. But in his dealings with the Rayah fate is always on the side of the Turk.

The inalienability of land in Turkey, and the loopholes for fraud to which this peculiarity of the law so easily lends itself, are curiously illustrated in a despatch from Consul Dupuis, dated 'Soulina, April 1, 1867.' One extract will suffice :—

‘In compliance with your lordship’s instructions, directing me to make a report on the subject, I beg leave to submit that during a residence of upwards of six years in these parts, and previous to the cession of the Ionian Islands to Greece, I was constantly in communication with the Turkish authorities, remonstrating with them against acts of cruelty and oppression committed towards Greeks and other Christians. By the laws of Turkey no Christian, unless a Rayah, can hold property in the soil, and it appears that once a house is burnt down the land reverts to Government. During the time of my predecessor a row of houses in the upper part of this town was secretly set on fire, and, as is alleged, by order of the local authorities, or with their connivance, to dispossess Greeks and others of land acquired during the Russian and Austrian occupation of Soulina. A respectable Greek inhabitant assures me that his house and ground, for which only a short time previous to the fire he paid 280*l.* to the then Pasha, was especially marked out for destruction

in order thus fraudulently to reacquire the ground which by existing law could not be held by a Christian, notwithstanding the money payment which had been effected. Fortunately, through his own exertions, the house escaped the conflagration; and knowing by this dishonest action the insecurity of his tenure, he was compelled to bribe the *cadi* or judge to grant him Turkish title-deeds or “*hoget*” made out in the name of a Mussulman. As has already been stated, many of the Greek and Christian inhabitants acquired their little property in houses and enclosures during the occupation of this place by the Russians and Austrians; but no sooner did the Turks become masters of the soil than, unless a “*hoget*” of ownership could be produced, they were ordered in several instances to pull them down, or to give up a portion or an enclosure appertaining to them; and if a Mussulman desired any particular locality to build upon and the hut of a Christian stood in the way, means were always at hand to remove the latter either by fire or the hatchet.’¹

All this was perfectly consistent with Turkish morality and Turkish law, and ought to have excited no surprise. No engagement made by a Mussulman with a Christian, or by a Mussulman Power with a Christian Power, can bind the Mussulman if the engagement is not sanctioned by the Sacred Law.

The following is one of the complaints forwarded to the Foreign Office last year from the Herzegovina by Consul Holmes :—

‘If a Christian holds a piece of Turkish land, and erects a house or other building in the neighbourhood, the Turk seizes the ground upon which the house stands. In like manner if the cultivator encloses with

¹ Consular Reports of 1867, p. 13.

a hedge or a wall some tract of free and communal land for pasture, wood, or other use of his own, there is no remedy, the Aga [Turkish landowner] becomes master of that also. If the Christian *Kmet*¹ clears any wooded ground, or excavates a garden amongst rocks and stones by his own labour, whatever may be the distance from the master's land, the Aga appropriates that too, on the ground that the slave *Kmet* has worked at it whilst he was maintained by the master's estate. For this same reason the Turks, in concurrence with their co-religionists, prevent the recovery and cultivation of land when they know they cannot appropriate it, so that the Christians may not possess it.'² The inevitable consequence of this state of things is, to quote the language of the Andrassy Note, that 'nearly the whole of the land not belonging to the State or the mosques is in the hands of Mussulmans.' The Turkish Government itself, in fact, admitted about a year ago that the Rayahs could only 'in a certain measure enjoy the products of the lands' they cultivated, 'but without possessing them (*mais sans les posséder*).'³

To say that the Rayahs can only 'in a certain measure enjoy the products of the lands' they cultivate is certainly a very mild description of the grinding extortion to which they are exposed. Let me try to give an idea of it in the following summary which I believe represents accurately the average condition of the Christian Rayah in Turkey.

Let us begin with the method of levying and collecting the various taxes which are wrung from the

¹ The name applied to the Christian tiller of the soil.

² Parl. Papers of 1876, No. 2, p. 35.

³ Parl. Papers of 1876, p. 69.

Rayah. Everything that he can call his own is taxed,¹ and the mode of collecting the taxes increases the oppression indefinitely. The Porte itself has on various occasions admitted the existence of the evil and promised to correct it. It did so in the Hatti-Chérif of Gulhané nearly forty years ago in the following language :—

‘ A deplorable practice still subsists, though its consequences cannot fail to be disastrous ; it is that of the venal concessions known under the name of Iltizan (tithe-farming). By this system the civil and financial administration of a district is handed over to the will of an individual—that is to say, sometimes to the iron hand of the most violent and avaricious passions.’

The Hatt of Gulhané accordingly promised to take energetic steps to remedy the abuse. Seventeen years later the Hatti-humayoun finds the evil as rampant as ever, and volunteers another promise of reform :—

‘ The promptest and most energetic measures will be taken into consideration for correcting the abuses in the collection of the taxes, especially of the tithes. The system of direct collection will be substituted by degrees, and as speedily as possible, for the practice of farming in all the branches of the State revenue.’

Yet once again we pass over an interval of twenty years, and we find in 1876 the same monotonous tale of grievous oppression and promised reform. ‘ Although there is every reason to hope,’ said the Sultan fifteen months ago, ‘ that, thanks to the measures *to be* taken, the proposed object will be completely achieved,

¹ ‘ A poor family may have to pay a thousand piastres a year for land that scarcely yields so much net revenue. No species of property escapes taxation. If the Bulgarian has but a wife, he must pay for the usufruct of that sole possession.’—*Ranke*, p. 481.

it is not the less true that the causes which produce trouble among the peaceable populations are in a great measure due to the unseemly conduct of some incapable functionaries, and particularly to the exactions to which the avaricious farmers of taxes lend themselves in the hope of a larger profit.' ¹

Pope's description of mankind at large is certainly true to the letter of the Rayah of Turkey. He 'never is, but always to be, blessed.' If promises could make a man happy, he ought to be the happiest of mortals. But, 'in spite of these formal declarations,' says the Andrassy Note, 'the system of farming is still in force to its fullest extent.' And in force it will remain so long as the execution of Turkish reforms are left with the Turkish Government. Its tribe of venal and depraved officials are not likely to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs. Under a reformed and honest administration where would they find the means to build palatial residences and stock their harems?

But let us see what this tithe-farming means. The tithes are sold by Government to the highest bidder; and so keen is the competition that the successful competitor not seldom pays more than the tithes will yield. In England this of course would mean that he would be a loser to the extent of the difference between the price he gave and the tithe of the year's produce. Unfortunately for the poor Rayah, however, Turkey is not England, and the Turkish tithe-farmers manage matters in a different way. Having bought the tithes, these speculators visit the villages, which are thus legally delivered over to their rapacity, in order to assess the year's tithes. They bring with them a retinue of followers and horses, and live on the villagers at free

¹ Parl. Papers of 1876, No. 2, p. 17.

quarters during their pleasure. They take whatever they have a fancy to, and they pay for nothing ; and so expensive are these visits that the poor villagers are often obliged to borrow, at a ruinous interest, from their unwelcome guests the very means with which to provide for their luxurious requirements. Unfortunately it sometimes happens that their requirements include the wife, or daughter, or sister of the host, as the case may be ; and then, like the monarch of old, he has his choice of three alternatives, but all from the hand of man : resistance, a bribe, submission. As to the first, he has no arms, and is quite helpless in the presence of the tithe-farmer and his armed retainers. Resistance is therefore out of the question, unless he flies to the mountains and joins or gets up a band of brigands or insurgents. Submission is abhorrent to him, and he gives, when that suffices, the bribe—possibly borrowed at exorbitant interest from his oppressor. By law the tithe-farmers ought to see the thrashing of the grain, and when it is measured to fix the proper tithes. But this legal obligation they rarely fulfil. Too indolent to discharge the duty themselves, and too suspicious to trust subordinates, they assess the tithes at an arbitrary valuation, which of course is very much in excess of the real value. Again, the poor Rayah has no redress. Theoretically he may appeal to Government officials ; but these officials are in league with the tithe-farmer, who is frequently nothing but the dummy, behind which some influential member of the Government robs and harasses the Christian peasant. Besides, it may not suit the convenience or *dolce far niente* disposition of the farmer to carry away his grain after it has been duly assessed ; so he leaves it in the field or under cover of some shed, and if any damage ensues the

village has to make it good ; or the grain is left in expectation of a rise in price, or in the hope that the peasant, in his need, may be tempted to consume it, in which case he is liable to be charged double price. More often the crops are left to rot on the ground till the tithe-farmer receives a sufficiently large bribe to let them be housed. They must not be touched till the tithe-farmer has selected his portion. Hay, potatoes, and all sorts of garden produce are not taken in kind. The price is arbitrarily fixed, and ready money must be paid down. An appeal to the Government authorities is quite useless, for they invariably decide in favour of the tithe-farmer.

But suppose the poor villager has not money enough at hand to meet these exactions. In that case ‘misery upon misery,’ to quote the touching language of the poor Herzegovina insurgents :—

‘His house will be occupied at his expense until he has paid the whole. He is bound to maintain and serve those who are quartered upon him at their imperious pleasure, and his expenses in so doing go for nothing in the account. By way of example : if a person owes 20 piastres and spends 100 in the maintenance of these people, it is not taken into consideration. At last an arrangement is made ; the peasant acknowledges his debt with double interest ; or an animal is taken for 50 piastres, though it may be worth 100 or more. Many cause the poor people of the villages to be put in prison, where they suffer from hunger, cold, flogging, and other ill-treatments. Sometimes false receipts are given, and the amount of the debt has to be paid again.’

I have been using the conventional designation of ‘tithe-farmer ;’ but in point of fact there are no longer

any tithe-farmers in Turkey. The men are there, but it is not of tithes that they are any longer the farmers. When Sultan Abdul Aziz travelled in Europe in state, an extraordinary impost was laid upon all the produce previously named, to bear the cost of his journey. This tax raised the tithe to an eighth part of the produce, and though it was imposed as an extraordinary charge for a temporary purpose, it has never been removed, and is now an ordinary tax. It is an eighth, therefore, and not a tithe, that the Rayah pays; and when all the extortions are taken into account it may be put down at 50 per cent., and sometimes at a much higher figure.

I have mentioned, however, but a fraction of the imposts which crush the spirit and paralyze the energies of these subjects of the Porte. Turkey is a great tobacco-grower, and the so-called tithes of this also are farmed out by Government. Before the farmers go their rounds, with a goodly company, to value the tobacco crop, some of their agents are sent to examine the quantity of tobacco still growing on the stalk. These 'go in procession from house to house, and from plantation to plantation, and prolong the time as they please in order to feed gratuitously.' On the pretext of having possibly put down too little, this inquisitorial visit is repeated generally three times, and then the farmers themselves go their rounds, the poor Rayah being obliged to provide for them all, however long they may choose to stay. They act, in truth, as masters on his property. They order what they like, and there is nothing for him but humbly to obey.

The oppression involved in all this may be imagined when it is remembered that everything which the peasant can call his own is subject to taxation. All spirits are taxed; herbs used for dyeing are taxed; there is a

land-tax, and a house-tax, and a grass-tax ; there is a tax of fifteen to twenty piastres on every head of large cattle, and a tax of two piastres on every head of small cattle. This latter tax affords peculiar opportunities and temptations for extortion. The animals are numbered in the month of March, a short time before the greatest mortality in the flocks takes place ; and the peasant has to pay, not on the average number of the animals which remain to him, but on the maximum which are alive at the healthiest season.

From two to four piastres have to be paid annually for every bee-hive. Then there is the horse-service, by which the Rayah is obliged to act as the drudge of the military, and is sometimes taken several days' journey from home ; and all this without the slightest remuneration, and without any compensation for the horses, which may perish, as many do, in this service.

Another grinding tax from which the Christian subject of the Porte suffers grievously is the duty of working on the public roads. No member of the family who can work—and there are sometimes as many as ten in a family who are thus liable—is exempted from this duty. The place where the work has to be done may be miles away from the Rayah's home, and it may be at a critical season of the year, when all hands are required in the fields. This happens about a fortnight in each year, and though it costs the peasant not less than 100 piastres a day, he does not get so much as a morsel of bread in return ; he gets kicks and insults instead.

Another monstrous tax is the 'Rad' or labour-tax. We have seen how thoroughly the Rayah's time is taken up in looking after his flocks and fields, and rendering compulsory service to the Government. But

the Turk thinks that he has still leisure enough on his hands to earn, by daily labour, from 500 to 1,500 piastres, and on the presumption of these imaginary earnings every Christian is made to pay the fortieth piastre to the Government, that is, 25 piastres in the 1,000. The Christian's word is not taken for the amount of his earnings, it is fixed for him; and though he may be laid on a bed of sickness, or otherwise disabled, the tax must be paid.

The last tax that I shall mention is the poll-tax. Every male Christian, from birth to death, must pay the poll-tax for exemption from the military conscription. It amounts to 30 piastres a head, and every male Christian is bound to pay it, from the new-born babe to the decrepid beggar. It is supposed to be a fine paid for exemption from military service. But, in the first place, the Christians do not wish to be exempt from military service;¹ on the contrary, they object to any such exemption, and the Hatti-humayoun, of 1856, promised the abolition of the exemption—a promise which, it need not be said, has never been fulfilled. But, in the second place, children, and the old and feeble, are not liable to military service under any Government, even that of Turkey. How then can they be liable to the fine which is supposed to free them? But it is absurd to appeal to the elementary rules of equity in the case of such a Government as Turkey. The result is that, children and beggars not being able

¹ The balance of the evidence is decidedly in favour of this conclusion. I make this statement after a careful examination of the Blue Books on Turkey published since the Crimean War. The Christians have an objection to be drafted indiscriminately among Mussulman soldiers, but they would gladly serve as separate regiments.

to pay for themselves, their respective villages have to pay for them. In this way a Rayah of average means pays in taxation somewhat less than 3,000 piastres annually.

But his grievances do not end here. In Herzegovina or Bosnia he rents his land from the Aga, or Turkish proprietor. In many cases the land was originally his own, but he has been dispossessed of it under the operation of the legal quibbles already described, or simply by the rude arm of force. Let that pass, however, and let us see how it fares with him in the relation of tenant and landlord. It is a feudal relationship in theory : in practice it is nothing but a cruel and degrading serfdom.¹ The following are exactions which the landlord extorts from his Christian tenant:—A fourth part of the various produce obtained from the ground ; one animal yearly, as well as a certain quantity of butter and cheese ; to carry a certain number of loads of wood, and materials for any house which the landlord may chance to be building : to work for the landlord gratuitously whenever he may require it ; to make a plantation of tobacco, and cultivate it until it is lodged in the master's house ; to plough and sow so many acres of land, and look after the crop till it is safely lodged in the landlord's barn—and all this gratuitously. As a rule, the produce thus cultivated for the landlord exceeds the produce of the land farmed by the tenant for himself. And all this, let it be remembered, is in addition to the fleecing which the Rayah has undergone at the hands of the Government.

¹ 'They feel oppressed under the yoke of a real servitude; the very name of Rayah appears to place them in a position morally inferior to that of their neighbours—in a word, they feel themselves slaves.'—*Andrassy Note*.

I shall now give some evidence to show that, if this account is open to any objection at all, it is to that of being a very considerable understatement of the truth.

Among the list of questions addressed to our Consuls in Turkey by Sir Henry Bulwer, in 1860, is the following:—

‘Are the Christian peasantry in the Christian villages as well off generally as the Mussulmans? and, if not, where is the difference?’

Consul Abbott answers, from Monastir:—

‘No: the Mussulmans being the chief proprietors, hire Christian labourers to whom they advance, for wages, &c., more money than they can possibly pay, and at high interest. They thus get so entangled with their Mussulman creditors, who are merciless in their demands, that they have frequently to work all their lives for them, or sell the little landed property they may possess, to extinguish their debts. On the other hand, the Mussulmans make it a point to buy off all land in the hands of the Christians.’¹

Consul Calvert, writing from Salonica, enters more into detail; but his answer is substantially the same as Consul Abbott’s. Both the Turkish peasantry and the Christian, he says, fare very badly at the hands of the officials and tax-gatherers; but he goes on to explain that there are important elements of aggravation in the oppression of the Rayahs from which the Turkish peasantry are free:—

‘One point of difference consists in the fact that the irregularities of the tax and tithe collectors, and the excesses of the police force, not to speak of the depredations of brigands, are practised to a large extent and

¹ Consular Reports of 1860, p. 5.

with more barefacedness on the Christian than on the Mussulman peasantry. It is, however, extremely difficult to define the extent of the difference, and quite impossible to prove the facts on which the general statement of its existence is founded.¹ But I feel persuaded that, without admitting any special claims of the Christians on our sympathy, the tacit submission of the Christians to the abuses in question, and to others of a harassing character, has conduced to their perpetuation at the hands of the notoriously rapacious tax and tithe-farmers. The Mussulman peasantry are not so extensively imposed upon, because the superior chance which their complaints have of being listened to by a district government, in which the element of their co-religionists preponderates, causes them to be regarded with greater respect. The Mussulman peasantry, nevertheless, suffer from the same causes as their fellow-labourers on the soil, only to a smaller degree. There is, however, a positive difference, and a very important one, in the condition of the Christian peasants in the farms ("tchiftliks") held by Turkish proprietors. They are forcibly tied to the spot by means of a perpetual and even hereditary debt, which their landlord contrives to fasten upon them. This has practically reduced many of the peasant families to a state of serfdom. As an illustration, I may mention that when a tchiftlik is sold the bonds of the peasantry are transferred with the stock to the new proprietor. In Thessaly there are Christians who own farms on the same conditions. Upon one occasion in which the landlord, who was a merchant, had become a bankrupt, I remember noticing that among the assets borne on his balance-sheet, there

¹ The impossibility rests on the inadmissibility of genuine evidence before the Turkish tribunals.

figured the aggregate amount of the peasants' debts to him, and it formed a rather large item.'¹

From Bosna-Serai Consul Zohrab sends a similar reply :—

‘The Christian peasants in the Christian villages are generally miserably off, working land which does not belong to them; they are but the labourers of the proprietors, who, with rare exceptions, appropriate the lion's share of the harvest. The Mussulman peasants generally work their own land, and having only Government taxes to pay are well to do; but those Mussulmans who labour on the lands of others are as badly off as the Christians.’²

Major Cox, on whose supercilious contempt for the Bulgarian Christians I have already commented, does not, much to his credit, suffer his prejudices to blind him to plain facts. His answer is as follows:—‘The Christians are exposed to the necessity of entertaining strangers, and the others are not. The Christians are the subjects of “hangharijeh” or forced labour, and the others are not. The Christians are frequently obliged to give their labour to the Mussulmans of the village at a low rate of wages.’³

The compulsory hospitality to which Major Cox refers is attested by all travellers who write with a competent knowledge of the country, and it is one of the most galling humiliations to which the Christians are exposed. Even if the ‘strangers’ should occasionally turn out to be ‘angels unawares,’ the ‘necessity’ of entertaining them would rob the visit of all its grace and all its charm. Unfortunately,

¹ Consular Reports of 1860, pp. 10–11.

² Consular Reports of 1860, p. 55.

³ *Ibid.* p. 58.

however, their visits are anything but angelic. They are not 'few and far between,' to begin with, but very frequent; and the demeanour of the guests proves them to have more in common with the rude assailants of Lot's house than with the mysterious visitors who sought shelter under his roof. I am afraid of wearying the reader with quotations, and shall therefore limit myself to the following extracts, out of a large mass, in corroboration of Major Cox :—

'The *Kharâj*, or humiliation¹ tax, payable by all Christians in the Empire, is now levied from the mountaineers (of Kurdistan) with the greatest severity, and the higher rates are often imposed upon those who have absolutely no means of defraying them. The tax-gatherers, moreover, frequently give the poor people *teskerés* or receipts, for the preceding year (by which artifice they pocket the money themselves), and should they happen to go into a different district, or another official be appointed to their own, they are generally called upon to produce these vouchers, and forced to pay a second time. The villagers assured me that the proceedings of their officials were vexatious in the extreme. They always come accompanied by several followers, take possession of the best houses during their stay, make the most preposterous demands upon them for luxuries which they never heard of, eat up their stock of provisions, and on leaving give them a piastre or two, so as to be able to say that they

¹ I have already called attention to the studious pains taken by the Turkish Government to mark, even in its official nomenclature, the degradation of the Christians. It was not enough to make them pay a yearly tax as ransom for their lives, but their bitter 'humiliation' must ever be kept before their minds in the very name of the annual tax.

paid for their entertainment, according to the requirements of the *Tanzimât*.'¹

Cyprien Robert, in his account of the Slavonic provinces of Turkey,² says that, oppressive as the regular taxes are, they are nothing compared to the irregular exactions to which the Christians are constantly exposed. Among these irregular extortions he mentions 'the unforeseen claims for labour on the public works which any Pasha has a right to exact, and which usually cost more than thirty days' work in the year. A still worse vexation is the *Gazdalik* or obligation to provide lodging and food for all the guests (*gazda*) who travel with firmans, or on the Sultan's service. The headman of every village is bound to supply these requisites at the cost of the commune.'

In strict law, only persons holding an official position are entitled to claim this enforced hospitality. But 'official' is a term so elastic that all kinds of fish pass through its meshes.³ In Rayah experience soldiers are

¹ The Nestorians and their Rituals, i. p. 385. The first volume of this valuable work is a record of travels in various parts of the interior of Turkey. The author lived for years in the country, and was familiar with some of the native languages. So that his experiences, which have all the air of impartiality, are entitled to the highest credit. The picture which he gives of Turkish rule in ordinary times is truly horrible.

It may be necessary to explain to some of my readers that '*Tanzimât*' is the technical name for the barren programme of reforms which followed the Hatti-chérif of Gulhané.

² P. 481.

³ 'All Turkish officials, from the Governor-General to the hangman, think it right and just, when on a journey, to quarter themselves on the peasants without ever thinking of paying; and at the same time they demand the services of their host and his family, and the best of everything there is to be had.'—*Five Years in Bulgaria*, p. vi.

officials, and so are policemen. Indeed, from all accounts, the Turkish zaptieh is the very incarnation of all that is brutal and rapacious.

‘These policemen have a good time of it,’ says Mr. Barkley.¹ ‘They receive about 300 piastres (2*l.* 15*s.*) a month, and a uniform. Out of this they have to find a horse and feed it, and keep themselves. The horse they procure in this way. They hear of a good beast belonging to a Bulgar in some far-away village. Up goes the policeman, sleeps at the man’s house *nolens volens*, discovers him to be in league with the brigands, and takes him prisoner. The poor fellow knows it will go hard with him if he comes before the Pasha, so offers anything he has to be let go. The horse then changes masters, and, should it not prove as good as was expected, the same trick is played on the first Giaour he meets with a better one, and a swap is made. Thus all the best horses in the country are owned by policemen or zaptiehs. Then it costs him but little to keep the horse or himself either, as both live on the villagers and never pay for their keep. No one travels without a mountain guide, and, besides paying Government for this protection, one has to give a good bakshish to the man himself. So that, though a zaptieh’s pay is not much, it is a post greatly coveted. It would be far better for the poor Bulgars were they allowed to protect themselves, instead of having these Government ruffians let loose upon them.’

‘Every vilayet,’ says another engineer, who speaks with some years’ experience of Bulgaria, ‘possesses a battalion of these gendarmes (zaptiehs), recruited exclusively from amongst the Mussulmans. Their chiefs

¹ Five Years in Bulgaria, p. 14.

have no scruple to enrol in the ranks of these so-called guardians of the peace men who are the very scum of society. Numbers of bandits and assassins are turned into policemen, in order to please the authorities ;¹ for it is difficult to procure honest men on account of the smallness of the pay. . . . The brutality of the zaptiehs and their ignorance are proverbial throughout the East. . . . They are the terror and the nightmare of the Rayahs. They penetrate everywhere as a matter of right and usage, and there are few peasant families who have not witnessed, more than once, the brutal passions of these men exercised on some of their members.’²

This is the evidence of men who have an intimate knowledge of what they report ; and it is confirmed by one of the most prejudiced, though I am glad to add one of the most honest, of Her Majesty’s consular agents—I mean Major Cox, who writes as follows :—

‘ The police are so inadequately paid that they make no concealment of taking money from the peasants, which they do in the following manner : if ten arabas, or carts with oxen, are required for the service of the Government, they collect thirty and release twenty on receiving payment from the villagers. They live at the expense of the inhabitants, and such is the moral influence they possess over the minds of the Christian peasants, that there is nothing which they may not do with impunity in some of the remote villages,’³ in-

¹ Cf. Barkley, p. vii. : ‘ The zaptiehs are the constant and never-ending curse of all the villages, whether Turkish or Bulgar. They are recruited from the very lowest and most ruffianly of the Turks. Many, if not most of them, have been brigands, and all are robbers.’

² *La Vérité sur la Turquie*, pp. 109–110.

³ *Consular Reports of 1860*, p. 60.

cluding, as Major Cox proceeds to add, outrages on the female members of the families on whom they quarter themselves.

‘The most crying abuse connected with these “corvées,”’ says Consul Calvert in 1867, ‘is that when an order is issued for, say 200 packhorses, the town police seize 500 or 600. A sort of bargaining takes place, each owner endeavouring to get his animals released, and rarely succeeding in his object without compounding for the favour by the payment of money.’¹

And this state of things is not occasional merely, or confined to a district here and there : it is chronic and universal. The following extract from a ‘Report of the Treatment of Christians in Epirus,’ addressed by Consul Stuart to Lord Stanley (now Lord Derby) in 1867, shows that the account which I have given of the taxation of the Rayahs is far below the mark.

‘Taxation has now become oppressive in this province, and if it continues to increase in the ratio of the last few years, it must ere long be intolerable. The means of the country are sensibly diminishing ; nevertheless, almost every year some new tax is laid on, or some old one is increased. And the pressure on the people is still further aggravated by the system of farming the taxes, which is still maintained in respect to some of the most important branches of the revenue. I have now before me a return, carefully prepared, of the charges of every kind, to which a working farmer is absolutely subject ; *they amount to 67 per cent. of the proceeds of the farm. Out of the 33 per cent. which he can call his own, he has to pay the interest and at least an instalment of his spring loan, and support himself, family, and stock as best he can.*

¹ Consular Reports of 1867, p. 25.

‘ But, besides the ordinary taxes, there are extraordinary contributions and forced loans, which, for things of the kind, now recur in rather quick succession. Large sums of money are thus withdrawn from the country, without any return or equivalent whatever, either immediate or prospective. In fact every levy of the kind, under whatever name disguised, is simply an act of spoliation, perpetrated by the strong hand of authority.

‘ There are about 220,000 Christians in Epirus, and about 130,000 Mussulmans. The ordinary Government revenue may be stated at 300,000*l.*, of which 240,000*l.* is paid by the Christians, and 60,000*l.* by the Mussulmans. The latter are the chief landowners, but the former have almost the monopoly of the trade, industry, &c., of the country, the duties of which they consequently have to pay. They are moreover charged with the military exemption tax, which figures for about 26,000*l.* *Nevertheless, largely as the Christians contribute to the Government revenues, they derive scarcely any benefit from the Government expenditure; while of the Mussulmans several thousand, indeed at present nearly the whole of them, are receiving Government pay.*¹

‘ In the Herzegovina,’ says Consul Zohrab, ‘ I calculate the peasant’s share of his crop at 33 per cent.’²

If the reader desires to appreciate the refinement of cruelty with which the Christian is robbed of all the fruit of his toil, let him read a most instructive despatch written in 1867 from Prevesa to Lord Stanley. The writer, Consul Barker, gives in detail all the various imposts which the Rayah is bound to pay; and the result is that, ‘ after deducting expenses of labour in raising

¹ Consular Reports of 1867, p. 57.

² Consular Reports of 1860, p. 55.

the produce and conveying it to town for his landlord, little or nothing remains for the maintenance of his family and himself; and from year to year many sell off stock to pay their debts and the taxes, most of them possessing in clothes only the ragged suit they wear daily, with merely a mat to lie upon in a most miserable hut; and many a female peasant is obliged to wash her clothes piece by piece near the stream or well, since a change to wear on a washing day she cannot possess. I beg that it may be understood that, although this statement treats of the district of Prevesa only, the condition of the peasantry of other districts is even worse.’¹

And now I leave the reader to judge whether I have established my indictment against Turkey under the four heads of total insecurity for life, for honour, for religious freedom, and for property. If I have, it is evident that the Ottoman Power is not a civilized Government but an organized band of free-booters, without any of the generosity or virtues which even free-booters have sometimes been known to display. If, on the other hand, I have failed to establish my case, it is certainly not for want of evidence, but owing to the untrustworthiness of the evidence which I have produced. But if my evidence is untrustworthy, what evidence are we to believe? My principal witnesses have been gentlemen in her Majesty’s Consular service, whose natural bias, as recent events have too plainly shown, is always to screen the Turkish Government as far as this can be done without telling a falsehood. But they are an honourable body of men, with very few exceptions; and while it is impossible to suppose that they would in any case state what they

¹ Consular Reports of 1867, p. 9.

did not believe to be true, it may be added, without any slur on their integrity, that they could hardly avoid the unconscious influence of professional traditions and political prejudices, all of which would be in favour of putting the case against the Turkish Government as mildly as truth would allow. Yet with all these safeguards against exaggeration, or, to put it more correctly, with all these temptations to understate the case, the picture which the Consular Reports of the last twenty years have drawn of Turkish misrule is something so horrible, so utterly antagonistic to the elementary principles on which civilised society is based, that I for one cannot feel otherwise than grateful to any Power which shall put an end to it. And the Consular Reports are confirmed, as I have shown and could show still more abundantly, by independent witnesses on whose evidence not a shadow of suspicion can be cast; witnesses too whose opportunities of observation have been equal to their integrity.

But an objector may say:—I cannot dispute your evidence; but if the state of things is as you describe, it seems almost incredible that society in Turkey should hold together at all. Yet we know, and yourself admit, that, putting aside the Mussulman population, the Christians of Turkey not only have survived their cruel bondage, but have steadily advanced in prosperity and civilisation. How do you reconcile this fact with such a condition of existence as you have described?

The objection is a fair one; but the explanation is easy. Fortunately for the Christians, they form the vast majority of the population of European Turkey. Their oppressors are a minority; and in some districts the minority is so small as to be capable of only re-

tarding, not stopping, the progress of the Christian population in knowledge and general prosperity. There are villages and considerable towns in Bulgaria and elsewhere in Turkey where the Turks are but a fraction of the population. This fraction may indeed embitter the existence of the general mass ; for where insecurity is general the wrong of one family poisons the lives of thousands, since no one can tell on whose head the next blow may fall. Still the mass moves on, enjoying a certain measure of prosperity and happiness in the intervals of massacre and outrage ; and the passing traveller may see bright faces and hear the music of merry voices, and go his way in the innocent belief that the Rayahs have not so much to complain of after all. His back is perhaps hardly turned when the brutal zaptieh, alone or with some of his fellows, makes his appearance ; and the smiling village becomes a scene of terror, or possibly of outrage. ‘Over and over again,’ says Mr. Barkley, ‘have I seen every woman and girl of an entire Christian village disappear as if by magic at the approach of a zaptieh ; and when he enters the village all the men stand staring about watching to see what may take place, like a flock of sheep when a strange dog comes among them.’¹ Or it may be that the traveller has an introduction to a Turkish official who makes himself very agreeable and takes the stranger to see whatever sights the place can boast of. In the course of their ramble they meet a Christian maiden of modest mien and pretty face. The Turk speaks kindly to her, pats her perhaps on the cheek and strokes her long golden hair with an ominous smile in his sensual eyes. The simple traveller thinks, ‘How kind and fatherly these Turks are ! and what an interest they

¹ Five Years in Bulgaria, p. viii.

more, and settle the Eastern Question between them. That would be an appropriate outcome of the Gospel of National Selfishness which has been proclaimed upon our housetops by those who appear to think that man then only attains to the true dignity of his nature when he has succeeded in ridding himself of all the generous impulses of humanity, so as to be able to test all questions not on their intrinsic merits, but in their bearing on his own ease and comfort. This is the real meaning of 'British interests before all things.' It is an ignoble and grovelling sentiment, and thenation which yields itself up to it is already on that *facilis descensus* from which, according to the poet and to universal experience, the return, if made at all, is difficult and laborious. War is a great calamity; but it has its nobler side too; and a war in vindication of eternal justice and in defence of a suffering people is as noble a spectacle as the policy of exclusive regard to one's own interest is base. And the latter is not only base, but foolish. A frank resolve to act with Russia would have subdued the obstinacy of the Porte, and thus prevented a war which now seems inevitable.

CHAPTER II.

TURKISH MISRULE INCURABLE.

THE advocates of Turkey now admit—hesitatingly, grudgingly, and with various pleas of extenuating circumstances—that the administrative Government of the Porte is bad. But they urge that Turkey has at last turned over a new leaf, and ought therefore to have a trial of a year or two to enable her to work out her regeneration. The Treaty of Paris is still a sacro-sanct document in their eyes, and its signatories are bound to secure the independence and integrity of the Turkish Empire. Russia must accordingly be warned off, and the new Sultan and his reforming Vizier be left in peace to carry out their philanthropic and liberal designs. They have no responsibility for the past, we are told, and may therefore initiate a new *régime* with a clear conscience, and with the good wishes and hopes of Europe.

I propose to examine this plea, and to prove that it rests on a foundation of sand.

It is true that the present Sultan was not on the throne when the Bulgarian atrocities took place, and equally true that Midhat Pasha was not then Grand Vizier. Nevertheless, I charge upon both of them the full responsibility of the atrocities : upon Midhat without any qualification whatever ; upon the Sultan as

an accomplice after the act, though I am willing to believe that he is but a passive tool in the hands of an unscrupulous minister.

Let us see how the facts really stand. In Panagurishta 3,000 human beings were massacred in cold blood, 'the most of them being women and children.' 'From the numerous statements made to him,' Mr. Schuyler goes on to say, 'hardly a woman in the town escaped violation and brutal treatment. The ruffians attacked children of eight and old women of eighty, sparing neither age nor sex. Old men had their eyes torn out and their limbs cut off, and were then left to die, unless some more charitably disposed man gave them the final thrust. Pregnant women were ripped open, and the unborn babes carried triumphantly on the points of bayonets and sabres, while little children were made to bear the dripping heads of their comrades. This scene of rapine, lust, and murder continued for three days, when the survivors were made to bury the bodies of the dead. *The perpetrators of these atrocities were chiefly regular troops commanded by Hafiz Pasha.*'

What happened at Batak is thus described by Mr. Schuyler:—

'This village surrendered without firing a shot, after a promise of safety, to the Bashi-Bazouks, under the command of Ahmed Aga, of Burutina, a chief of the rural police. Despite his promise, the few arms once surrendered, Ahmed Aga ordered the destruction of the village and the indiscriminate slaughter of the inhabitants, about a hundred young girls being reserved to satisfy the lust of the conquerors before they too should be killed. I saw their bones, some with the flesh still clinging to them, in the hollow on the hill-side, where the dogs were gnawing them. Not a house

is now standing in the midst of this lovely valley. The saw mills—for the town had a large trade in timber and sawn boards—which lined the rapid little river, are all burnt, and of the 8,000 inhabitants not 2,000 are known to survive. Fully 5,000 persons, a very large proportion of them women and children, perished here, and their bones whiten the ruins, or their putrid bodies infect the air. The sight of Batak is enough to verify all that has been said about the acts of the Turks in repressing the Bulgarian insurrection. And yet I saw it three months after the massacre. On every side were human bones, skulls, ribs, and even complete skeletons, heads of girls still adorned with braids of long hair, bones of children, skeletons still encased in clothing.'

These deeds of hell lose nothing of their horror in Mr. Baring's version of them. The inhabitants of Batak, he says, 'had a parley with Achmet¹ (Agha), who solemnly swore that if they only gave up their arms, not a hair of their heads should be touched. A certain number of the inhabitants, luckily for them, took advantage of this parley to make their escape. The villagers believed Achmet's oath, and surrendered their arms; but this demand was followed by one for all the money in the village, which of course had also to be acceded to. No sooner was the money given up than the Bashi-Bazouks set upon the people and slaughtered them like sheep. A large number of people, probably about 1,000 or 1,200, took refuge in the church and churchyard, the latter being surrounded by a wall. The church itself is a solid building, and resisted all the attempts of the Bashi-Bazouks to burn it from the outside; they consequently fired in through the windows, and getting upon the roof, tore off the tiles, and

¹ In quotations I adopt the orthography of the writers.

threw burning pieces of wood and rags dipped in petroleum among the mass of human beings inside. At last the door was forced in, the massacre completed, and the inside of the church burnt. Enough, I think, has been said to show that to Achmet Agha and his men belong the distinction of having committed perhaps the most heinous crime that has stained the history of the present century, Nana Sahib alone, I should say, having rivalled their deeds.' He estimates the number massacred in Batak alone at 5,000, and says 'the intention was to exterminate all except those few girls (probably about 80), whom they carried off to satisfy their lusts. For this exploit Achmet Agha has received the Order of the Medjidié. He was also promoted to the rank of Yuz-bashi.'

At Boyadjikeui Chefket Pasha rivalled the deeds of Achmet Agha at Batak. 'The remark that I made about Batak,' says Mr. Baring, 'applies equally here. What makes the act of Chefket Pasha so abominable is that there was not a semblance of revolt; the inhabitants were perfectly peaceable, and the attack on them was as cruel and wanton a deed as could well have been committed. . . . For this heroic exploit Chefket Pasha has received a high place at the palace.'

'The case is not improved,' adds Mr. Baring, 'by the fact that these deeds were committed not only by Bashi-Bazouks, but also by regulars; the Arab soldiers, in particular, distinguishing themselves by their licentiousness and ferocity.' Among special acts of cruelty in this carnival of horrors Mr. Baring mentions the case of 'a child who is said to have been impaled on a standard and paraded in the streets,' and of 'some of the richer villagers' who 'were subjected to cruel tortures before being put to death, in hopes that they

would reveal the existence of hidden treasure. Thus Petro Triandaphyllos and Pope (i.e. parish priest) Necio were roasted, and Stoyan Stoychoff had his ears, nose, hands and feet cut off.'

'The facts of this tragedy,' says Mr. Baring, with suppressed indignation, 'are now in the possession of the Turkish Government, and it is their bounden duty, by making a striking example' of the miscreants, 'to prove to the world that it thoroughly disapproves of their infamous conduct.'

And this 'infamous conduct,' let it be observed, was not provoked by any atrocities on the part of the Bulgarians. A few Mussulmans were killed in fair fight, and two women accidentally. After the most careful investigation into all the circumstances of the atrocities, Mr. Schuyler says in his Second Report :—

'The burning of these villages and the murders and atrocities committed were clearly unnecessary for the suppression of the insurrection, for it was an insignificant rebellion at the best, and the villagers generally surrendered at the first summons. Nor can they be justified by the state of panic, for, as I have shown, that was over before the troops set out on their campaign. An attempt, however, has been made, and not by Turks alone, to defend and palliate these acts on the ground of previous outrages, which it is alleged were committed by Bulgarians. I have carefully investigated this point, and am unable to find that the Bulgarians committed any atrocities or outrages, or any acts which deserve that name. I have not been able to find that (as was stated) the insurgents set fire to Bulgarian villages for the purpose of inciting the inhabitants to revolt. Nor, excepting two cases, have I found that the insurgents set fire to villages inhabited

by the Turks. . . . I was unable to assure myself that more than two Mussulman women had been killed at Panagurishta, and these were killed in fight. Neither Turkish women nor Turkish children were killed in cold blood. No Mussulman women were violated ; no Mussulmans were tortured ; no purely Turkish village, with the exception of Urutsi, was attacked or burned ; no Mussulman house was pillaged, and no mosque was desecrated.'

I am sorry to have been obliged to raise a corner of the veil which I would gladly have left for ever over the deeds of the Turkish Government in Bulgaria. But the English advocates of that Government have left me no choice. By insisting on our giving time to Midhat Pasha and his colleagues to carry out their promised reforms they compel us to test the sincerity of those personages ; and no better test can be supplied than their attitude towards the Bulgarian atrocities. Have they expressed shame for them ? Have they expressed regret ? Have they promised that they shall not be repeated, and ratified the promise by punishing the malefactors ? On the contrary, the Turkish Government has gloried in its shame, or, to speak accurately, its moral sense is so blunted as not to see that the deeds of its agents in Bulgaria reflect any shame either on it or them. Safvet Pasha, the representative of the Porte at the Conference, cheerfully accepted on behalf of his Government the full responsibility of all that had been done in Bulgaria, and actually claimed credit for it. 'The Bulgarian movement in the country near the Balkans,' he said, 'was repressed with admirable promptitude.' He is penetrated with 'profound sorrow' indeed ; but for what ? Not for the deeds of darkness which have horrified Christendom, but for the

folly of the Christians which provoked them. ‘I cannot,’ says this specimen of Turkish humanity, ‘find words which can faithfully express the profound sorrow which the Government has felt at *the revolt of its Christian subjects, and at its consequences.*’ He has even the audacity to parade the doings of the Turkish authorities in Bulgaria as constituting a distinct claim on the sympathy and confidence of Europe. These are his words:—‘In giving proofs of incontestable vitality, and rendering a signal service to the cause of order, and consequently also to that of true progress, the Ottoman Government believes that it has acquired new titles to the sympathetic interest of the Great Powers.’ And he goes on to add that, in reviewing the period which has elapsed since the Treaty of Paris, his Government ‘sees nothing which does not permit it to reckon upon a feeling of complete confidence on the part of the Great friendly Powers.’ And these are the men who are to regenerate the Turkish Empire! Surely the first step in the path of reform is to acknowledge its need. But the Turkish Government declares that it has nothing to unsay or to undo.

No wonder Lord Salisbury found it hard to suppress his indignation at this cynical exhibition of Turkish effrontery. The point, however, is that the Turkish Government, on its trial before the Areopagus of Europe, formally assumed the responsibility of the doings of Chefkets Pasha, Achmet Agha and the rest, without dropping a hint of disapproval. Nor does the proof of its guilt end here. We all remember the tardy despatch of Lord Derby denouncing the principal criminals by name and demanding their punishment. Chefkets Pasha, the chief of the denounced criminals, replied to Lord Derby’s denunciation by a defiant letter

in the official organ of the Turkish Government in Constantinople, in which he alleged that he had ‘done nothing in Bulgaria besides executing, in his military capacity, the orders he had received, and not from the Grand Vizier of Abdul Aziz, but from the present rulers. This he writes, and no one dare gainsay it, for both himself and the other murderers—Achmet Agha Timbrichli and Achmet Agha Bacontuliuli—boast that they have in their pockets the Minister’s injunctions to slay, to burn, to terrorise, and will produce them if challenged.’¹

Chefket Pasha and his companions in crime may now summon Mr. Schuyler as a witness in support of their plea. ‘It has been claimed,’ he says in his Second Report, ‘that the massacres and outrages in Bulgaria were not ordered by the Porte, and that it even had no knowledge of them. There is, however, very strong reason to believe that Abdul Kerim Pasha, the Serdar Ekrem, who was sent to put down the insurrection, and has since been the Commander-in-Chief of the troops

¹ *Times*, Nov. 6.—Letter of Special Correspondent from Therapia. The Special Correspondent of the *Daily News* confirmed the communication of his colleague, but I have lost the reference. I have heard it objected that the Turkish Government would speedily find means of getting rid of agents, who should imprudently seek to screen themselves by pleading that they had acted under orders still in their possession. But the objection assumes that the Turkish Government wished to clear itself from the responsibility of its agents, an assumption of which there is no proof. On the contrary, the Government, through the mouth of Safvet Pasha, has accepted the entire responsibility. The object was to terrorise the population of Bulgaria: but the lesson might be lost if the Government were to separate itself from the massacres and punish its agents. See also No. I Blue Book for 1877, p. 729, where Sir H. Elliot says that Chefket Pasha ‘professed to have in his pocket orders which would show that he had done no more than carry out his instructions.’

operating against Servia ; Hussein Avni Pasha, the late Minister of War ; and Midhat Pasha had cognisance of these deeds, if they did not actually order them.'

This is a grave charge, and it is made in the face of day by the Consul-General of the United States, whose book on Turkestan is a sufficient guarantee against any suspicion of Russian proclivities. During my own visit to the East last autumn I received more than one confirmation of Mr. Schuyler's accusation from persons who know Midhat Pasha and his antecedents exceedingly well. One of them, did I feel myself at liberty to mention his name, would be generally admitted—and by none more readily than by Lord Salisbury—to be among the ablest and best-informed of the officials in her Majesty's service in European Turkey. This gentleman assured me that 'Midhat Pasha was unquestionably the author of the Bulgarian atrocities,' and he added that he was 'one of the most unscrupulous and cruel men in the Turkish Empire.'

If any additional proof were needed of the complicity of the Turkish Government in the Bulgarian atrocities, we have it in the damning fact that all the miscreants denounced by Lord Derby have been shielded by the late and the present Grand Viziers. 'It is certain,' says Mr. Schuyler in his last Report, 'that nearly all of those who particularly distinguished themselves for their cruelty and barbarity were rewarded, decorated, or promoted by the Porte, or have since held high positions in the army.' And what is still worse, 'an attempt has been made,' says Mr. Schuyler—and he is confirmed by independent evidence—'to punish some of those who did their best to act in a legal manner and to spare innocent men.' One of these brave and noble Turks—*apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto*—receives special praise from Mr. Baring

for his 'admirable conduct.' The Vali of Adrianople, Midhat Pasha's relative and bosom friend, ordered this man to call out the Bashi-Bazouks and let them loose on the Christians. The brave Haidar Bey (he was Mutessarif of Slimnia) refused to obey, and then Chefket Pasha was sent to execute the Governor's orders—with what success we know too well. Haidar Bey, nevertheless, did his best to protect the Christians, and with considerable success. Among other good deeds he prevented Chefket Pasha from destroying, after his peculiar fashion, seven villages which Abdul Kerim Pasha had ordered him by telegraph to destroy. He also tried to recover for the Christians some of the cattle and other booty which Chefket Pasha had distributed among the Bashi-Bazouks. 'Had it not been for Haidar Bey, Mutessarif of Slimnia,' says Mr. Baring, 'whose conduct it is impossible to praise too highly, the Christians [of the seven villages that escaped] would have fared badly.'

Alas for Haidar Bey! He has 'fared badly' in place of the Christians whom he so nobly shielded. He was summoned to Constantinople some time after Lord Derby's denunciation of the criminals, and pressure was put upon him by the late Grand Vizier to give perjured evidence in favour of Chefket Pasha. On his refusal he was removed from his post as Governor of the province of Slimnia, where he was naturally much beloved by the Christians, and appointed to a less agreeable post. After a time the mock trial of Chefket Pasha and his honourable acquittal took place; and Haidar Bey still remaining firm, he has been disgraced by Midhat Pasha.

In thus rewarding the guilty and punishing the meritorious Midhat Pasha, to do him justice, has done

nothing but follow the traditions of his Government. The two men who made themselves most conspicuous in protecting the Christians during the Syrian massacres were Abdel Kader and Saleh Bey. The former, being independent of the Turkish Government, was safe from any direct interference; but means were found indirectly of exposing him to a systematic course of petty persecution.

Saleh Bey was a subject and servant of the Porte, and was summoned to Constantinople in disgrace to answer a number of false charges. The Christians, whose benefactor he had been at great personal risk, appealed to the English Government on his behalf in a document from which I make the following quotation:—

‘The conduct of Saleh Zeki Bey, colonel in the Imperial army, during the disasters which have befallen the Christians at Damascus, is well known. Nothing could exceed the activity, the zeal, and the humanity he displayed on the occasion. Colonel Zaleh Zeki not only came in person to the Christian quarter to protect the Christians, but he attacked the assailants, and saved several men who were in danger of being assassinated, and saved both the lives and honour of many women, displaying an energy quite exceptional among the soldiers of the Government. He gave shelter in his own house to a great number of refugees throughout the disturbances. He also used to send to his house all those whom he saved, and none of those who sought asylum thereat were refused admittance, but were received kindly, and even generously provided with food and other necessities. He consoled and reassured them amidst their fears; to many he provided clothing gratuitously and as an act of charity; and all that without expecting any reward.’

This appeal was forwarded to the British Ambassador at Constantinople by the English Consul-General at Beyrout, who confirmed all that the Christians said in praise of Saleh Bey, and expressed a hope that his 'Excellency, gratified to learn that out of the mass of guilty and treacherous Turkish commanders one at least stood out a bright and honourable exception, would not permit Saleh Bey to be treated with injustice.' The British Government interfered and saved Saleh Bey. But he was removed from the scene of his usefulness and from the purview of Blue Books.¹

On a fair review of the facts, then, it seems to me clear that the Turkish Government is the real criminal in the Bulgarian atrocities. Chefket Pasha and other subordinates did nothing more than carry out the orders of the Government. For this they have been rewarded in defiance of Europe, while the few honest Turks who disobeyed orders in the interests of humanity have been punished.

Now I ask any reasonable man whether a Government like this can be trusted to carry out such reforms as are necessary for the regeneration of Turkey? Where in the history of the world has a corrupt oligarchy reformed itself? And where has there ever been an oligarchy so corrupt and unscrupulous as the gang of Pashas who flourish on the misery of the population which they misgovern and plunder? As a body the Pashas are as ignorant as they are unprincipled, and they generally owe their promotion to harem intrigue, or caprice, or favour, or superior cunning; seldom indeed to real merit. Midhat's predecessor, Ruchdi Pasha, began life as a private soldier, and he is now a millionaire. The late Commander-in-Chief was

¹ Parl. Papers on Syria, pt. ii. pp. 131-2.

a grocer's boy, who attracted Sultan Mahmoud by his good looks, and owed his rise to a cause which the readers of Plato's *Phædrus* will understand without further explanation. He too amassed a large fortune in a short time. And so one might go on with the rest of the band. Nearly all of them begin life poor and die rich. Nor is the explanation far to seek.

Turkey, as I have already explained, is divided into Vilayets or Governor-Generalships, each of which is administered by a Pasha, who receives his appointment direct from the Porte. The Vilayets are divided into Sandjaks governed by Kaimakans, or Lieutenant-Governors. The Sandjaks are subdivided into Kazas, and are ruled by Mudirs; and the Kazas are still further subdivided into Nahizèhs or hamlets. Each of these officials holds his office on the most precarious tenure, and his prime object therefore is to make hay while the sun shines, and feather his nest as fast as he can. This he does by bribery and extortion in any and every way that he finds practicable. The Pasha being supreme, and wielding unlimited power, can go to work without let or hindrance; and he generally succeeds in accumulating a large fortune in a short time, part of which he employs in bribing the Grand Vizier, or the Grand Vizier's favourite, to give him a more lucrative appointment.

Now, seriously, does it stand to reason that such men as these will of their own accord carry out, as we are assured they intend to do, the programme of reforms recommended by the Conference? Who is to be the Hercules who shall cleanse the Augean Stables? Midhat Pasha? But even if Midhat Pasha were all that his English admirers say of him, he cannot be everywhere, and his Augean Stables are co-extensive with

the Turkish Empire. He must carry out his reforms through the agency of others ; and where is he to find honest agents ? Is the corrupt tribe of Turkish officials to be turned into an army of honest reformers by a wave of Midhat's hand ? Are the Zaptiehs, and Cadis, and Mudirs, and Kaimakans, and Pashas, through whom he must act, likely to put themselves under a self-denying ordinance and zealously help to destroy the system upon which they have been wont to live and fatten ? The man who believes in such a miracle is beyond the pale of argument.

But where is the proof that Midhat Pasha is better than the rest of his tribe ? I should like some better evidence of his beneficent disposition than the Bulgarian atrocities. Where am I to find it ? Midhat is the son of a Cadi, and began life as a poor man. He is now one of the wealthiest men in Europe. Where did he get his wealth ? He has been in the public service of Turkey all his life, and the public service of Turkey is badly salaried in the subordinate departments. In 1857 he was sent to inquire into the conduct of the ex-Governors of Rustchuk and Widin, and to pacify Bulgaria. He was then a poor man, and he returned to Constantinople very rich. In 1864 he became Governor-General of Bulgaria, and at the close of his Governorship he was found to be one of the wealthiest men in Constantinople. Whence came his wealth ? Perhaps the following incident will supply the key to the problem. During the Grand Viziership of Mahmoud Pasha some Bulgarian merchants addressed a petition to the Grand Vizier, in which they denounced one Ismail Bey, who was then Mutessarif or Prefect of Toultscha, on the Danube. They accused him of systematic robbery, of peculation, of denial of justice, of

simony, and, in short, of all the long catalogue of vices which are characteristic of Turkish officials. Mahmoud was not without some good points in his character, and the proofs which accusers of Ismail Bey produced made an impression upon him. He ordered, accordingly, a Commission of Inquiry, which furnished overwhelming proofs of the guilt of the Mutessarif, and a procès-verbal was made out against him.

Meanwhile Midhat became, for a short time, Grand Vizier, and the Konak of Ismail Bey was illuminated in honour of the good news, for such it proved to him. The procès-verbal was quashed, and Midhat ordered another Commission which pronounced Ismail Bey entirely innocent. This was rather too strong even for the digestion of Constantinopolitan journalists, and one of them, the editor of the *Courrier d'Orient*, called public attention to the scandal. Midhat suspended the journal for three months; but the editor was not a Rayah, and consequently could claim foreign protection. He appealed to the law and produced such unimpeachable proofs of the justice of his accusation that the judges hurriedly closed the trial and decreed a liberal compensation to the journalist on condition that he should not publish documents which compromised high personages.¹

But, after all, there is Midhat's Constitution. Government by Pashas is gone, and Turkey has entered on a new career of Constitutional Reform. By a bloodless and peaceful revolution, accomplished by a stroke of Midhat's magic pen, she has spanned in one gigantic stride the space which separates the England of Queen Victoria from the England of Edward I. And now she stands proudly abreast of 'the Mother of

¹ La Vérité sur la Turquie, p. 130.

Parliaments' and challenges the admiration of Europe. Such was the boast of the Premier Plenipotentiary of Turkey in explanation of the pre-arranged salvoes of artillery which announced to the members of the Conference on the first day of its meeting the proclamation of the latest abortion of Turkey's still-born reforms. 'A great fact,' said Safvet Pasha, 'is accomplished at this very hour, which changes a form of Government that has endured for six hundred years. The Constitution which his Majesty the Sultan has bestowed upon his empire is promulgated. It inaugurates a new era for the happiness and prosperity of his people.'

*Credat Judæus Apella; non ego.*¹ But let us see. I should be disposed, for my part, to feel more confidence in the sincerity of the Turkish Government if it were less lavish of its promises. I am a little weary of the Sultan's kaleidoscope of Constitutions, all of them promising, as they flit in succession across our vision, to 'inaugurate a new era for the happiness and prosperity of his subjects,' and all of them, without exception, mocking the hopes which they had raised. 'An Amurath an Amurath succeeds,' and Grand Vizier follows Grand Vizier, each with a brand new Hatt out of which endless blessings are to fall on the head of the suffering Rayah. But the Rayah has learnt by bitter experience that these constitution-mongers are only clever Oriental conjurers who by long practice have acquired the art of juggling Europe by periodical exhibitions of diplomatic legerdemain. Midhat's Constitution promises nothing which was not promised with equal solemnity and more august sanctions in the Hatti-Gulhané of 1839. That, too, was the 'inauguration of a new era for the happiness and prosperity of

¹ Hor. Sat. i. 100.

the Sultan's subjects.' That, too, propounded a new Constitution of which the fundamental points were these :—

‘ 1. Guarantees to assure to our subjects a perfect security in their life, their honour, and their property.

‘ 2. A regular plan of assessing and levying the taxes.

‘ 3. A plan equally regular for military levies and for the duration of their service.’

This Constitution was also proclaimed, like its latest successor, amidst salvoes of artillery and in the presence of the Sultan surrounded by the foreign ambassadors and by all the dignitaries, civil, military and religious, of the Empire. The Sultan, moreover, not only took a solemn oath himself to observe the new Constitution, but made the Ulemas and Grandees of the Empire do the same. And then the Constitution and the record of these vows, sworn before God as well as before the representatives respectively of Christendom and Islam, were laid, by way of final seal, in the chamber where the relics of the Prophet of Islam are preserved. And there they have remained from that day to this as dead and obsolete as the mummies of the Pyramids.

Now I should like to know what single element of hope is to be found in Midhat's Constitution which is not to be seen in full blossom in the Hatt of Gulhané, with its supplemental Tanzimât. But the blossoms which looked so fair in the ‘House of Roses’¹ proved to be like the leaves of the doomed fig tree, full of promise and barren of fruit. What reason is there to suppose that the flowery promises of Midhat shall be more prolific?

¹ Gulhané means ‘House of Roses,’ the name of one of the courts of the Sultan's palace in which the Hatt was proclaimed.

I find no ground of trust in the antecedents of the man, and his Constitution bears the evidence of imposture on its front, as I shall now proceed to show.

I do not dwell on the absurdity of supposing that Slaves and Greeks and Roumanians will ever submit to the degradation of calling themselves ‘Ottomans, without distinction, whatever faith they possess.’ As reasonable would it be to suppose that Englishmen would obey a summons from Nana Sahib to call themselves Sepoys. The name of Ottoman is to the Rayahs of Turkey a name rendered for ever odious by the undying memory of unutterable wrongs; and every man among them, except the debased hirelings of the Pashas, will regard the eighth Article of Midhat’s Constitution as the addition of gratuitous insult to unprovoked injury. Let that pass, however, and let us come to the substantial promises of the Constitution.

Article 4 says: ‘His Majesty the Sultan, under the title of “Supreme Kalif,” is the protector of the Mussulman religion.’

By Article 7 the Sultan is empowered to ‘carry out the provisions of the Law, human and divine’—that is, of course, the Cheri, the Law of the Koran and the Multeka. I have already shown what that Law teaches, and I shall have occasion hereafter of going more fully into the question. At present I merely call attention to the fact that the Constitution is formally based on the Sacred Law of the Multeka, which binds every Ottoman from the Sultan to the dancing dervish, and which forbids absolutely and eternally any approach to equality between the Mussulman and the non-Mussulman.

But perhaps I shall be referred to Article 11, which decrees as follows: ‘Islam is the State religion.

But while honouring this principle, the State will protect the free exercise of all faiths professed in the Empire, and uphold the religious privileges granted to various bodies, *on condition of public order and morality not being interfered with.*' The first part of this Article looks liberal enough; but the saving clause which I have marked by italics reduces it to a nullity. There is no kind or degree of religious oppression which may not be committed under cover of 'public order and morality not being interfered with.' The promises of previous Hatts and Constitutions have been quite as liberal; yet they have all remained dead letters in consequence of these dexterous clauses. The plea of 'public order,' as Midhat knows full well, will justify provincial governors in maintaining all the restrictions on the freedom of worship which I have already described, and which the Andrassy Note has denounced.

'Education is free,' says Article 15 of Midhat's Constitution. 'Every Ottoman can attend public or private instruction, *on condition of conforming to the law.*'

What 'conforming to the law' means will of course be left to the interpretation of the local authorities, and we may judge of the degree in which the promise is likely to be fulfilled by our experience of the past. The Tanzimât of 1844 promulgated a law of undenominational education throughout Turkey. Let us see how the promise has been redeemed.

'The schools are wholly open to the Mussulman population,'¹ say Consul Cumberbatch, writing in 1867 from Smyrna.

'In this town,' says Consul Calvert, writing from

¹ Consular Reports of 1867, p. 2.

Monastir in the same year, ‘there is a military preparatory school with from seventy to ninety pupils. None but Mussulmans are admitted into it. The other Turkish schools throughout the Pashalic are merely primary ones, where little else beyond reading and writing Turkish is taught A very strict supervision would in any case be necessary over the morality of the pupils: for I have heard of a Christian lad who was admitted to one of the public schools of Constantinople; but the immorality of the pupils was so gross that he could not live in that atmosphere of depravity. His parents removed him at his own desire.’¹

‘The public schools and charitable foundations,’ says Vice-Consul Maling, writing from Cavalla, ‘are without exception closed to the Christian.’

‘These schools,’ says a witness who will not be suspected of hostility to Turkey, ‘were, as everybody is aware, established under official patronage, and partly with the aid of official subsidies, some twenty years since, in every considerable town or centre, agricultural or mercantile, all over the face of the East Ottoman Empire. Their avowed object was the promotion of a purely secular and “non-denominational education.”

. . . . But, strange to say, stranger still to see, there are now throughout the Ottoman provinces no stricter “denominational,” that is Muslim schools, than these.

. . . . Masters, pupils, and teachers alike, let alone prayers, usages, and all the daily or weekly accessories of school education, are in nineteen cases out of twenty as thoroughly and emphatically Mahometan as an Omar or an Ottoman himself could desire; all else is combated or ignored; the training

¹ Consular Reports of 1867, p. 21.

and the trained are once more on the narrow line of Islam, and Islam only.¹

Art. 17. 'All Ottomans are equal in the eye of the law. They have the same rights and owe the same duties towards their country, *without prejudice to what concerns religion.*'

This promise has become a little nauseous after so many vain repetitions and cynical falsifications. Midhat, it will be observed, has provided a loophole for evasion in the saving clause which I have put into italics.

Art. 19. 'All Ottomans are admitted to public offices, according to their bent, merit, and ability.'

Excellent. But Article 18 unfortunately decrees that 'eligibility to public offices is conditional on a knowledge of Turkish, which is the official language of the State.' The effect of this is to disqualify five-sixths of the subjects of the Porte in Europe, and not a few in Asia, Mussulmans as well as Christians. In other words, Midhat has taken good care to keep the administration of Turkey in the hands of the ruling caste.

Art. 21. 'Property, real and personal, *of lawful title*, is guaranteed. There can be no dispossession *except on good public cause shown, and in default of previous payment*, according to the law and the value of the realty in dispute.'

If the reader will turn back to the Fourth Section of Chapter I. he will find that the words which I have marked by italics make this clause in fact nothing better than a cleverly devised trap for the robbery of non-Mussulmans. Non-Mussulmans, by a fundamental law of the Empire, can never possess the fee-simple of the soil. That always belongs to the State and cannot

¹ Mr. Gifford Palgrave's *Essays on Eastern Questions*, pp. 116-7. The book is dedicated to Lord Derby.

be given away. The effect of this is that when the house of a Christian who does not happen to be a Rayah is destroyed from any cause, the land, which he innocently imagined that he had purchased, reverts to its original proprietor, and the Christian must buy it over again before he can rebuild. The Rayah is not *legally*, though he often is in practice, under this disability. Midhat, however, has been careful to furnish a legal method of dispossessing him by constituting 'default of previous payment' a flaw in the title. A Rayah whose land is coveted by any Turkish Naboth can very easily be put into 'default' of this kind and robbed of his property.

One of the chief curses of Turkish administration is the system of tithe-farming. Does Midhat's Constitution abolish it? Not at all. The tribe of hungry officials must not be deprived of one of the great sources of acquiring wealth. So Midhat contents himself with one of those stale prohibitions of illegal imposts which can only be regarded as an impudent experiment on the credulity of Europe.

'Torture and questioning under any form are wholly and absolutely forbidden' by Article 26. So they were by the Tanzimât of 1844 and by the Hatti-humayoun of 1856; yet they remain in full vigour, and will flourish unchecked after the Constitution of Midhat has been decently buried in the tomb of all the Hatts.

These specimens of Midhat's Constitution are alone sufficient to brand it as an imposture. And the imposture becomes still more apparent when we examine the parliamentary machinery of this wonderful Reform Act.

Among other qualifications for deputies of the Lower House are a knowledge of Turkish and freedom from

‘judicial interdiction.’ The first excludes the great mass of the Slave Mussulmans as well as of the Christians, and there will be no difficulty in putting the second in force against any candidate who may be considered objectionable. One or two false witnesses can always be found to swear any charge against him, and a ‘judicial interdiction’ will at once disqualify him for Midhat’s House of Commons. This method of defeating candidates, however, would involve some little trouble, and trouble is a thing which the indolent Osmanli greatly dislikes. Midhat has accordingly managed to combine in his electoral apparatus the minimum of trouble with the maximum of result. ‘The number of deputies,’ says Article 65, ‘is fixed at one deputy for 50,000 males belonging to the Ottoman nationality.’ And ‘the election,’ says Article 66, ‘is held by secret ballot. *The mode of election will be determined, by a special law.*’ This ‘special law’ is not contained in the Constitution itself; Midhat is too astute a man to have published it to the world while the Conference was sitting; but he made no secret of it to English sympathisers, one of whom was good enough to explain it to me while the Constitution was still *in petto*. The ‘special law’ then ordains that the deputies shall be elected by the Medjlis or Municipal Council of each district. I have explained elsewhere the composition and procedure of these tribunals, and shown how utterly corrupt and fanatical they are. Yet these are the men who are to elect the deputies to Midhat’s Parliament! And they are at work while I am writing, for I find the following piece of news telegraphed from its correspondent at Pera to the *Daily Telegraph* of February 1:—‘The deputies are being everywhere elected by the local Administrative Councils.’ What

manner of men these Councils are likely to elect may be gathered from the following telegraphic despatch in the *Daily News* of the same date:—

‘Although no elections have really taken place in Bulgaria, the official Turkish paper published at Rustchuk announces that some persons have been freely elected for that town, Varna, and Tultscha, as members of the Turkish Parliament. Among them are three Beys and a Pasha. Of the Beys one is the same person who sent a congratulatory address to Chefket Pasha after the Bulgarian atrocities. The two others were censured some time since by Midhat Pasha for administrative misdemeanours. One named Schakir Effendi is known as the enemy of the Bulgarians and a staunch friend of the Circassians.’

And this is the outcome of the ‘great fact which,’ according to Safvet Pasha, ‘has changed a form of Government that has endured for six hundred years!’ Could imposture go further?

Yes : Midhat’s imposture does not stop even here. Docile as his Medjlis-elected deputies are likely to prove, he has taken care that they shall not have the power to thwart his will. ‘The initiative of bringing forward a Bill or altering an existing law,’ says Article 53, ‘is with the Ministry. The Senate and Chamber of Deputies may also originate a new law or the modification of existing ones within their province.’ But the Article goes on to explain that this ‘origination’ consists in suggesting the new law or the modification of the old one to the Grand Vizier, who will report the suggestion to the Sultan ; and if these illustrious personages approve, *the Council of State is empowered to prepare the Bill.*

By Article 51 it is declared that ‘one member

more than half the number' is necessary to 'make a House' in either Chamber; which means that the Government can adjourn any inconvenient discussion *sine die*, for it can always secure the absence of the necessary 'one' when the Houses meet.

Finally, 'the President and members of the Senate are nominated directly by his Majesty the Sultan,' and 'the number of Senators cannot exceed a third of the members of the Chamber of Deputies.' (Article 60.) Moreover, though 'the Senators are nominated for life,' 'they lose the capacity of Senator on accepting any other office.' In this way the Grand Vizier can get rid of any Senator who may chance to show signs of independence.

The upshot of the whole matter, then, is this. The Grand Vizier appoints the Governors; the Governors of the Districts appoint the members of the Medjlis;¹ the Medjlises appoint the Deputies; the Deputies cannot originate a bill; they cannot discuss any question unless a clear majority of the totality of members be present; and if by any chance they should succeed in introducing into a Ministerial Bill amendments unpalatable to the Grand Vizier, he can get the Senate, consisting of creatures of his own, to throw them out. The whole Parliament is thus the impotent and pliant tool of the ruling Pashas. And this is the fine Constitution for which the friends of Turkey claim forbearance and a fair trial.²

¹ See p. 41.

² 'Voilà avec quelle audace la Porte leurrait le public européen. Celui-ci, habitué à voir mettre à exécution les projets présentés par les États civilisés du Continent, était loin de se douter que le Hatt Impérial et la circulaire vizirienne n'étaient de la première lettre jusqu'à la dernière qu'un tissu de mensonges; et pourtant c'était ainsi. Ils prescrivaient, ces fanatiques et sensuels Musulmans, une masse d'améliorations qu'ils savaient être

That the view which I have taken of the Constitution is the true one is proved not only by its own language, but by the admission of the Turks themselves. Here is the explanation which the official organs of the Porte have given to calm the fears of any who might think that the presence of non-Mussulmans in the new Parliament might bode danger to Islam :—

‘To these we answer that they ought to bear in mind, first, that the majority of the Chamber will be composed of Mussulmans ; secondly, that its decisions can be taken only by the majority of voices ; thirdly, that all the decisions of the Chamber of Senators, whose members will be named by the Government and taken exclusively from among the high Mussulman dignitaries, will have to be confirmed by the Sultan. It is clear, then, that the Divine order [i.e. the Sacred Law] will thus be faithfully executed.’

For all these reasons, then, it seems to me utterly vain and foolish to expect any improvement from the official class in Turkey, and I know not where else to look for any reserve of moral force to regenerate the Sick Man. The symptoms of incipient dissolution are visible everywhere ; of convalescence nowhere. The gangrene is spreading steadily from the heart to the circumference, from the capital to the provinces and the rural population. The Turkish peasantry are losing the virtues of barbarians without acquiring those of civilised life. Truthful they never were when it served their purpose to lie ; but they were temperate, and now

complètement irréalisables. D’ailleurs, les hatts et les circulaires n’étaient même pas envoyés aux gouverneurs ; ils étaient destinés à produire leur effet dans le capitale seulement.’—*La Question d’Orient dévoilée*, p. 136.

all trustworthy evidence goes to show that they are rapidly ceasing to be so. Listen to the testimony of Vice-Consul Maling from Cavalla :—

‘The excessively high licensing system on taverns is considered by Christians a grievance peculiar to them ; but it is only fair to say that Mussulmans come fairly under its operation, for they are perhaps the greatest consumers. In fact, inordinate drunkenness is fast becoming a decidedly Turkish vice. It spreads to all ranks, renders any intercourse with their public men a very unpleasant duty, and creates a new barrier to the social fusion of the races: for the Christians as a body partake of the characteristic abstemiousness of the Southern races, and disgust and contempt are now added to the other unfavourable feelings with which they regard their oppressors.’¹

Mr. Barkley admits that the country Turks display in a capricious sort of way some of the rude virtues of barbarians. ‘Yonder gang of men,’ he says, ‘trudging along with their bullock carts are all capable of cutting my throat for the few piastres they may find in my pocket ; but at the same time if I take one of them into my service, give him 100*l.*, and send him by road with it to Stamboul, he will do his best to deliver it safely, and at all events will not touch it himself. Then how handy a servant he is ! If I only order him to shoot you on your way to visit me, he will do it without the least hesitation, and, what is more, hold his peace when it is done.’ True ; and he will lie till he is black in the face if he is questioned upon the subject—that is, if he has taken a fancy to his master. Besides, he regards the matter as a game of skill of which the

¹ Consular Reports of 1867, p. 31.

virtue is in the winning. Honesty and truthfulness of this character are obviously very equivocal virtues. They are rather of the nature of inherited habits, and have nothing of that deliberate moral choice (*προαίρεσις*), which is, according to Aristotle,¹ an essential element in the character of a really virtuous man.

But in the Turk of the town Mr. Barkley finds nothing at all to praise:—

‘But what can I say of his brother of the town, he in Government employ, from the *yasie* (clerk) to the highest in office? They are all dishonest, and only live to increase their wealth, and, as long as they can do this by fair means or foul, care nothing for others or what may come after them. Their word is never to be relied on, and their most sacred promises stand for nothing. They cringe and fawn on all they think above them, and are brutal and overbearing to their inferiors. They are barbarians from highest to lowest. They have failed to adopt any of the virtues of the West, but have welcomed with open arms all the vices. Yes *all*; for now I dare not except that most pernicious of all civilised evils—drunkenness. It has spread of late

¹ Ethics, bk. ii. cap. vi. He insists, with his incomparable power of reasoning, that to do virtuous deeds is not necessarily to be a virtuous man, since virtue is a habit of mind resulting from deliberate moral choice of what is right because it is right. In a previous chapter he illustrates the point by saying that a man is not necessarily a grammarian because he may chance to have ‘produced something grammatical.’ He alone is, properly speaking, a grammarian who ‘not only produces something grammatical, but does so grammarian-wise, *i.e.* in virtue of the grammatical knowledge he himself possesses.’ Aristotle would certainly refuse to admit that the capricious honesty of Mr. Barkley’s Turkish servant was a virtue at all. He would say, and say truly, that it was ‘an accident,’ and could not be accepted as an indication of character.

years with fearful rapidity, and I doubt if there is any place where it is more rampant than in the konacs of Stamboul.' ¹

Mr. Barkley's brother-engineer bears independently the same witness. During the fast of Ramazan, he says, the Turks, as a rule, observe the twelve hours' fast. But as soon as the muezzin announces from the minarets that the fast is over 'there is a general orgie.' The Turks gorge themselves with 'pillau and mutton,' and 'drink mastic (eau-de-vie) in abundance. In short, during the Ramazan the Turk makes night his day, and reciprocally'—fasting during the day, and revelling like a beast at night.²

Consul Blunt, who has spent most of his life in different parts of Turkey, and who has always shown himself friendly to the Ottoman Government, states as follows the result of his long experience:—'In the lowest class [of Turks] I have sometimes found truth, honesty, and gratitude; in the middle class seldom; in the highest never. Even the lower classes are changed for the worse. Five-and-twenty years ago you could trust a bag of money to a porter for short distances, to a carrier for long ones; it was the practice. No one ventures to do so now. The race, however, is rapidly dying out. A Turkish woman will scarcely ever have more than two children.'³

There is also a consensus of unbiassed evidence to prove the indolence of the Turk. Mr. Senior asked Consul Calvert how he accounted for the rapid depopulation of the Turks. 'There are several causes at work,' the Consul replied; and he instanced the

¹ Five Years in Bulgaria, pp. 90–1.

² *La Vérité sur la Turquie*, p. 32.

³ Nassau Senior's *Journey in Turkey and Greece*, p. 190.

conscription and the ingrained immorality of the race. The third cause was indolence and improvidence. 'The Turks are idle and improvident. The Greek labourers are not good ; one of them does not do half the work of an Englishman. But he does three times the work of a Turk, and I pay him three times the wages. Whatever be the explanation, the fact that the Turks are rapidly dying out is obvious.'¹

Another of Mr. Senior's informants, who had spent his life in Turkey, sums up his experience as follows :—

'All the faults of the Asiatic are exaggerated in the Turk. Whatever be his purpose, he uses the means which require the least thought. If he has to create a local Government, he simply hands over to the Pasha all the powers of the Sultan. If he wants money, he takes it wherever he can find it ; and if he cannot get it by force, he puts up to auction power, justice, the prosperity, and indeed the subsistence, of his subjects. He averts the dangers of a disputed succession by killing all the nephews of the Sultan, or preventing any from coming into existence. He relies on the rain for washing his streets, on the dogs for keeping them free from offal, on the sun for making passable the tracks which he calls roads, and on the climate for enabling him to live in his timber house without repairing it. In everything else he relies on Allah, and entreats God to do for him what he is too torpid to do for himself. His fatalism is, in fact, indolence in its most exaggerated form. It is an escape not only from exertion, but from deliberation. Our [English] attempts to improve the Turks puts me in mind of the old story of the people who tried to wash the negro white. He

¹ Nassau Senior's *Journey in Turkey and Greece*, p. 164.

never was, or will be, or can be anything but a barbarian.’¹

The reason why all the shepherds in Bulgaria are Christians, Mr. Barkley tells us, is that ‘the do-nothing lazy Turks’ find shepherding a too troublesome occupation. He was obliged sometimes to employ Turks on the railway; ‘but they are never really good workmen, owing to their utter inability to stick long to one thing.’ One of the tricks which they adopted for shirking work was prayer. The Mahometan is supposed to pray seven times a day; but the mass of the followers of the Prophet satisfy their consciences with a prayer morning and evening. As a rule, the prayer is a piece of traditional formalism and has nothing religious about it except the appearance. According to Mr. Barkley, it consists of ‘bowing backwards and forwards, repeating a fixed prayer, the meaning of which they do not understand, the greater part being in Arabic.’ But Mr. Barkley is an engineer, and it is possible that he is not a good authority on Mahometan devotions. Let us therefore take the evidence of a witness whose business it was to make a special study of Mahometanism in its religious aspect, and whose testimony, moreover, cannot be regarded as prejudiced, inasmuch as he has recently made himself conspicuous in the press as a champion on the side of Turkey. I mean Dr. Porter, who spent some years in Syria at the head of the Irish Presbyterian Mission.

‘Moslems,’ he says, ‘spend their time between indolence and indulgence, wandering with solemn step from the harem to the bath, and from the bath to the mosque. They are a praying people, and so are they a washing people; and there is just as much religion

¹ Nassau Senior’s *Journey in Turkey and Greece*, pp. 227–8.

in their ablutions as in their devotions. Prayer with them is a simple *performance*. They pray as they eat, or as they sleep, or as they make their toilet. These are all parts of the daily routine, performed with the same care and with the same solemnity. The Moslem merchant will lie and cheat, and swear and pray, and lie and cheat and swear again ; and these are like different scenes in the same drama, each in its place. His feelings are not shocked by thus mixing up things sacred and profane ; and the reason is, there is no sacredness in his prayers. A Moslem Emir or Pasha will issue orders for oppression, cruelty, and even murder ; and when the Muezzin call is heard, will spread his carpet, stroke his beard, and engage in prayer with a serenity, and we may add a solemnity, of countenance that is altogether wonderful.' 'It is never deemed necessary to the efficacy of prayer to have the mind composed or the thoughts turned heavenwards. Prayer is not in the least out of place in the midst of fraud and open robbery ; the Arab will imbrue his hands in a brother's blood, and while the crimson stain is yet fresh he will lift them up in adoration of the God of Peace ! What a mockery is this ! And yet I have sometimes heard the followers of the Prophet set forth as patterns to Christian men.' ¹

These, I repeat, are the words of a champion of Turkey, written and published when there were no party controversies to give a twist and colour to genuine convictions. They may therefore be received as a correct representation of the fact, even if their accuracy were not, as in fact it is, abundantly confirmed from other sources.

We cannot feel greatly surprised, therefore, that

¹ Five Years in Damascus, pp. 37, 77.

Mr. Barkley should deal somewhat cavalierly with prayers of this sort even if they were offered in obedience to a settled habit. But when they were used as means to idle away precious time for which the Turkish workmen were paid, it was a duty to religion as well as to his employers to suppress them:—

‘Directly a labourer felt a little tired, down he would go on his small carpet and work away for ten minutes, and then all the others in the gang, feeling ashamed of being outdone in devoutness, would follow suit, leaving the European master or foreman standing looking on. . . . Besides, the very knowing and extra idle men would throw in a prayer at all sorts of odd times (except the breakfast and dinner hour!).’¹

Consul Calvert (not the Consul Calvert last quoted) contrasts as follows the respective characters of the Rayah and the Turk;—

‘The Mussulmans of Roumeli, taken generally, are an idle, thriftless race, and fond of their ease. So far as they can safely venture to do so, they, so to say, live upon the Christians. Were the Christians to leave the country, it is probable that the Turks would collapse altogether. They have not the faculty of creating capital. Most of the lower classes lead a hand-to-mouth sort of life; whilst the wealthy are almost universally in debt, not to their fellow-Mussulmans, but to Christians and Jews. Both Christians and Jews complain that it is next to impossible for them to recover debts from a Turk; and at the present moment there are many Christian tradespeople who are on the verge of insolvency on account of their money being locked up in the hands of their Turkish debtors. They are the more diffident of applying to the authorities, since experience has

¹ Five Years in Bulgaria, pp. 34, 176, 193

taught them the perils attending such a course. They have equally good reasons for not refusing the custom of Turks, although these generally buy on credit. If their customers happen to die, their money is gone for ever.' ¹

As the Turk happens to be under the universal law of mortality, these Turkish debtors do, all of them, eventually die; and thus the Christian creditor is left to whistle for the money or the goods which he dared not refuse. Is it likely that the drones will ever of their own accord help to put the working bees, who are in every way so superior to themselves, in a position to turn them out of the hive? In other words, is it likely that Midhat Pasha has the faintest intention of putting the Christians in a position to throw off the Turkish yoke, which they certainly would do very speedily after being put on an equality with their ignorant and stagnant oppressors? But behind and beyond the reasons already advanced against the likelihood of recovery on the part of the Sick Man, there is one which, though the most convincing of all, is in a measure secure from criticism by its very enormity. The Turks—not individuals here and there, but the whole race—revel and grovel in the sins which overwhelmed the Cities of the Plain. This is the witness of all who have had opportunities of looking below the surface of the ordinary life of the Turk, and who relate what they have seen unbiassed by any particular theory. Mr. David Urquhart indeed contends that the Turks, after all, are not so very much worse in this respect than other nations, England included. But Mr. Urquhart is apt to be the slave of an overmastering theory, and he has a theory about Turkey into which his

¹ Consular Reports of 1867, p. 25.

genius enables him to fit his facts as on a bed of Procrustes. Moreover, the point of his comparison is polygamy, as though that were the whole of the case. It will scarcely be denied indeed—nor does Mr. Urquhart deny it—that polygamy, even under the most favourable circumstances, is essentially fruitful of immorality and degradation. ‘While we reproach Islamism,’ says Mr. Urquhart, ‘with polygamy, Islamism may reproach us with practical polygamy which, though unsanctioned by law and reprobated by custom, adds degradation of the mind to dissoluteness of morals.’

Strange! that he did not see the fundamental difference between the two cases involved in his own admission. ‘Though unsanctioned by law and reprobated by custom’: that makes all the difference. A nation can hardly be considered in a hopeless condition whose laws and public opinion condemn transgressions against the moral standard which it professes. The case against Turkey is that its moral standard is on a level with its practice; so that there is no lever power wherewith to raise it from the mire.

It may be laid down as an axiom that a nation’s capacity for regeneration and improvement depends mainly on the purity of its women. Without virtue in its women there can be no moral regeneration for a nation in a state of decadence. But the harems of Turkey are, by the universal agreement of those who know them best, hotbeds of immorality. How indeed could it be otherwise? The life of unnatural seclusion to which their inmates are condemned would, under any circumstances, be apt to enervate the mind and predispose the imagination to unwholesome thoughts. And the danger is of course increased indefinitely when the mind has no resources upon which it can fall back; which is

the case of the women of Turkey among the well-to-do classes of society. Most of them are slaves in the literal sense, and all are slaves practically; without a country; without occupation; without education; without aim or purpose in life beyond ministering to the brutal passions of their masters. Need we wonder that the life of the harem female is a monotonous round of petty jealousies, intrigues, scandal, and polluted imaginings? And what chance have the sons of such mothers of being virtuous men and self-denying patriots?

‘Their days,’ says Mr. Barkley, ‘are spent in stuffy-smelling rooms, smoking cigarettes and eating sweetmeats, and the only excitement of the day is paying visits to other women, or stewing in the debilitating bath. They have no rational subject of conversation, so naturally drift into filthy discussions and obscene stories. Their companions are their slaves—black niggers from the centre of Africa, or pretty Georgians who have been bred and reared for the market. Their minds never expand and are a wretched blank. . . . From what I have been told by Turks, I believe if they had half the liberty enjoyed by European women, Stamboul and all Turkey would be a hell upon earth. . . . Until the boy is ten years old he lives in the harem with the women, and listens all day to their low, ignorant conversation. He is stuffed with unwholesome food, and allowed to do just as he likes; in fact, both mind and body are poisoned in the most perfect way. At ten years old the fledgling Pasha hops forth from the maternal nest, and pecks about among his father’s numerous servants in the kitchen and stable-yard. He soon learns, if he has not already done so, to use disgusting oaths, to ride a horse bare-backed, to smoke a pipe, and to kick, cuff, and bully the cringing

menials he lives with. Each day he is instructed by a Mollah or priest in a little reading and writing, and by the time he is a man he can perhaps scribble a letter. No one has ever corrected him, no one has snubbed him; on the contrary, he has been taught to look on himself as a very fine fellow, and one of a most superior nation.’¹

And these are the men to whom the lives, the honour, and the fortunes of millions of Christians are committed! These are the reformers and regenerators whom we are bidden to trust! That Mr. Barkley’s picture is not over-drawn is evident from its agreement with other independent witnesses, such as Nassau Senior, Dr. Badger, Bianconi, and Mrs. Burton in her book on the inner life of the Mussulmans of Syria. Close contact with the Turk has a fatal tendency to disenchant even the most enthusiastic of his distant admirers. The gallant Major Leveson (‘the Old Shekarry’), who had much experience of different races, voted the Turk to be the most intolerable specimen of humanity. Being at home on leave from India when the Crimean War broke out, he volunteered, and was appointed to the Turkish staff under Omar Pasha. He had been led to form a high opinion of the Turks; but he soon found that it was ‘distance lent enchantment to the view.’ Thus he writes after a year’s experience:— ‘From what I have seen of the Turkish service I do not like it, and shall quit it as soon as the campaign is over. I believe, as a body, they are the most detestable race of people under the sun, and I think that their kingdom will soon pass away into other hands.’ Speaking of the battle of Balaclava, he says that the Turks, who held the redoubts on that occasion, ‘all

¹ Five Years in Bulgaria, p. 92.

behaved in an infamous manner, and bolted without hardly firing a shot, leaving the guns to the Bears. The lieutenant-colonel in command was the first to run. He mounted his horse on the approach of the Russians, and told his men to save themselves as they best could.' ¹ Major Leveson admits, however, that the Turkish private can fight if well led.

Dr. Porter, whom I have already quoted as an advocate of the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire, has the following pertinent strictures on Mr. Urquhart's apology for Turkish immorality:—

‘What! and would Mr. Urquhart venture to affirm that the worst vices of the most degraded in Christian England would bear comparison with the abominations that are almost universally practised in Moslem cities? Virtue, as a moral principle, is unknown to either sex in this land [Turkey], and the disgusting obscenities of the harem, as well as the unnatural vices of the other sex, could not have escaped the notice of Mr. Urquhart, had he indeed studied the habits of the people of this country, or the effects of Moslem institutions. The filthiness of the common conversation among all classes, of all ages and of both sexes, is sufficient of itself to show the deep depravity in which this unhappy land is engulfed. For the profligacy of European cities I offer not one word of excuse or apology. It is a disgrace to Christianity; but with all this there is sufficient sense of shame still found, even in the most profligate, to make them blush at the thought of their guilt, and there is enough of high-toned morality in the vast majority of the people to make them shun the society of the dissolute, and mourn over their fall. Here vice has spread over the nation like a flood, corrupting every

¹ Sport in Many Lands, by ‘the Old Shekarry,’ pp. xxv.–vi.

dwelling, making wanton every thought and look, and polluting the very language which is the medium of social intercourse.'

This was written some years ago in the midst of the people whom the writer describes, and in a book (*Five Years in Damascus*), which has reached a second edition. Married missionaries, I may observe in passing, have one special advantage in Turkey, from which celibates are debarred : they can obtain through their wives a thorough insight into the interior life of Moslem women.

I have from private sources the fullest confirmation of all that Dr. Porter alleges against the morality of the Turks. There is at this moment a letter before me from a gentleman resident in Syria. He is a layman who has devoted himself for years to the noble work of civilising the victims of Turkish misrule. He knows the people thoroughly, and the account which he gives of their immorality is positively frightful—so frightful that it is impossible to publish it. But one or two extracts may indicate the nature of what I dare not quote :—

' You are aware that the Turks, who govern all the country, do not constitute more than one-tenth or one-twelfth of the population. They are the descendants of that wild horde from Turkestan who seized the capital in the 15th century, and have ever since governed the whole empire with an exclusive view to their own power and profit ; fearfully oppressing all the indigenous inhabitants (both Christian and Moslem, but more especially the former), and devastating all the country, raising large revenues from it, and leaving it without roads, bridges, harbours, &c. &c. ; and all this in order that they may live in bestiality and luxury in

the towns. Now these men are “sinners before the Lord exceedingly” (the Biblical reader will understand the allusion)—not merely one here and there, but very generally. Boys and young men “walk the streets” in all their towns. . . . A man of wealth and power (a governor, judge, or mufti, for example), will send to any Christian who has a nice-looking son, and order the son to come to his house. And such is the state of abject terror and abasement to which the Christian population has been reduced by centuries of the most cursed and cruel oppression that a refusal is hardly ever ventured upon, or the whole family would on some pretence or other be ruined, if not destroyed. Within the last few years the poor abject creatures have gathered courage from the residence of foreigners, and have refused sometimes;’ and then the Turk has recourse to forcible abduction. The writer, however, is careful to add :—

‘Pray do not think that I bring these charges against the villagers and fellaheen, or the Druzes of the Hauran, or the tent Arabs, or the mountaineers, among all of whom I have wandered so much from the Danube to “the river of Egypt.” My charge is against the towns of the Empire where the Turks have resided and introduced their “morals.” How I wish my countrymen could know these facts ! Will no widely circulated paper have the courage to publish them ? But it would be quite necessary to conceal strictly my name, employment, and whereabouts ; or I should soon be found to have committed suicide ; or worse still. . . . Somehow or other they would ruin or kill me.’

The writer from whom I am quoting, it may be well to add, is by birth and conviction a strong Conservative ; yet he is unmeasured in his indignation at the

policy of Lord Derby during the past eighteen months. It would have been much pleasanter to spare the reader even an indirect allusion to the abominations which he describes; but the admirers of the Turk have left the lovers of truth and justice no alternative. When they assure us that Turkish morality is at least on a par with Russian morality, and probably a good deal better, they force those who hold a contrary opinion to furnish, so far as decency will permit, some evidence of what Turkish morality really means. The best, and I believe the true, excuse for those who advocate 'the integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire' is that they really do not know what manner of being the Turk is, and what manner of life it is which he compels those to lead who are cursed with his rule.

And now I ask the candid reader to decide whether I have not advanced evidence enough to prove that the government of Turkey is not intolerable only, but incurable in addition. And I commend to his consideration, as an appropriate conclusion to this chapter, the following weighty opinion from one of the ablest and most experienced of our Consuls. After giving credit to the rural Turks for such negative virtues as have been noticed some pages back, he proceeds as follows:—

'These are redeeming traits in the Mussulman character which it is but simple justice to record. Observed, however, in the wider circles of society, and from a political point of view, the Mussulman of this country appears under a different aspect. His religion has set upon him a seal which nothing can change or efface. It pervades his whole life, individual, social, political; it enters into all his motives and regulates all

his actions, admitting of no change and allowing no fraternity with others. These remarks apply chiefly to the educated Mussulmans of the country and to those of high rank. As to the mass of the Albanian Mussulmans, they know little more of their religion than the pride and indolence which it inculcates.

‘Now as regards the Christians, it is certain that the desire of progress and Western civilization is spreading among them. With the diffusion of education new ideas are gaining ground and new aspirations are growing up. But how to give effect to these ideas and aspirations,—there is the difficulty. This tendency is in direct antagonism to the policy of their rulers, who, while respecting Western civilization, fear its influence and dread its approach. They therefore endeavour to repress the onward impulse of the Christians, to check their progress, to keep them down. And as they can no longer do this by open force they are careful to exclude from the country all the material aids and appliances of advancing society. Hence they refuse to make roads, to establish banks, facilitate communication, encourage industry, promote trade, invite foreign skill, and enterprise, &c., by all of which the Christians would be the chief gainers. So that this system of refusal proceeds, not, as has long been thought, from apathy and procrastination, but from a studied policy of self-preservation which sees danger to Ottoman supremacy in the progress of the Rayahs.’¹

¹ Consular Reports of 1867, p. 57.

CHAPTER III.

MUSSULMAN RULE IN SPAIN AND SICILY.

ONE of the stock arguments advanced of late, to prove the capacity of the Porte to govern non-Mussulman races with moderation and justice, is the case of Spain and Sicily under Arab domination. The enlightenment of the Moors, their philosophy, their poetry, their chivalry, their architecture, still attested by the splendours of the Alhambra,—all this is put in evidence to show that Turkey may turn over a new leaf and do likewise. But to argue thus is to draw one and the same conclusion from two sets of premisses which have nothing in common. The annals of Turkey may be searched in vain for any of the qualities which made the Moorish *régime* in Sicily and Spain, after a sort, illustrious. Intellectual sterility has been the characteristic of the Turk from his first apparition on the stage of European history till now. In no single department of human life has he ever been a producer. He has contributed nothing to the improvement or progress of mankind. He has been a destroyer everywhere, and nothing but a destroyer. Every land on which he has settled he has blighted materially, morally, intellectually. He has reduced to ruinous heaps some of the fairest and most fertile regions of the earth, and has destroyed every home and centre of civilization which has fallen under his ruthless and barbarous sway. He has never

dreamt of any higher aim or purpose in life than the satisfaction of his animal appetites ; and the paradise for which he hopes hereafter is but a repetition of his orgies on earth. Deeming the Koran to be the last expression of the Divine Will and the sum of all knowledge which it is good for man to learn, he has ever been an enemy to civilization, and his concessions to the pressure of Western diplomacy have been made reluctantly, and have proved barren of fruit. A comical illustration of this grudging deference to Western ideas is found in the fact that till quite lately, and even now for aught I know to the contrary, the Copernican system of astronomy was taught in the Turkish schools and colleges on the European side of the Bosphorus, while the Ptolemaic still held its own on the opposite shore. Is it, after all, so very outrageous, is it even an exaggeration, to characterise a race whose history may be thus accurately epitomised, as ‘the one anti-human specimen of mankind’? What is the history of Ottoman domination everywhere but a black record of cruel and demoralising warfare against all that conduces to the welfare and happiness of man?

To launch such an accusation against the Mussulmans of Spain and Sicily would certainly be doing them a gross injustice. There is much in their history which it is unpleasant to read ; but there is also not a little which is pleasing and attractive, at least as regards the Mussulmans of Spain. Their intellectual activity was remarkable. They covered the land with educational institutions. The principal towns had their colleges and academies, and almost every village had its gymnasium. Fifty of these academic institutions were scattered over the rich plain of Granada alone—a fact which sufficiently attests the Moor’s thirst for

knowledge, and of which an even more striking proof is afforded in a biography of blind men eminent for scholarship which is still extant among the Arab works in the Escorial. It cannot be pretended, indeed, that the Arab literature of Spain furnishes an intellectual landmark in the progress of the human mind such as we find in the mental development of most of the European nations. In this respect the Moors of Spain are not to be compared with their Christian rivals. They cannot be said to have produced, like the latter, anything which the human race is likely to value as a 'possession for ever.' They were, for the most part, imitators rather than creators. Even in the field in which they were more particularly distinguished, that of natural and mathematical science, they were rather the intellectual conductors of previous thought than the originators of new ideas. The chief praise due to Averroes himself, the most eminent among them, is that of interpreting Aristotle to Western Europe, not of attempting to improve on the system of the Stagirite or making it the starting-point of a fresh development. In fact, there is good reason for thinking that Averroes was unacquainted with Greek and knew Aristotle only through the medium of a translation; and writers who have made a special study of the subject have not hesitated to say that the Arab's commentaries on the philosophy of the mighty Greek have tended rather to darken than to illustrate the subject of his admiration.¹ Fruitful as they were too in the domain of history, the quality of their work is, in the judgment of competent writers, out of all proportion to its abundance. How indeed should it be otherwise? It is under the shadow of free

¹ See Degerando, *Hist. de Philosophie*, vol. iv. c. 24.

institutions that the philosophic spirit is apt to flourish : the air of despotism is not favourable to its growth, and a despotism based on fatalism leaves no room for it at all. The Mahometan cannot admit the possibility of historical development and at the same time remain loyal to his creed ; and, as a matter of fact, such Mahometans as have made the experiment have really been free thinkers. It is not surprising that under these circumstances the historical works of the Moors of Spain should have been little better than a dry record of facts set in a frame of Oriental gaudiness, and diversified occasionally by a rhapsodical eulogy on some prince of whom a ballad or legend had made a hero.

All this, however, must in justice be put down to the political and religious environments of the Spanish Moor rather than to any inherent vice of character. Not only in the intellectual efflorescence which he threw out on every side, but also in the graces and charities of life, he often showed what was in him if he were only set free from the debasing influence of an immoral system. The Spanish minstrelsy affords honourable evidence not merely of the prowess of the Moors but also of their not infrequent generous chivalry. Where in the history of Mediæval chivalry shall we find a more graceful incident than that which is recorded of the Moorish army which besieged the Queen of Alfonso VII. in the Castle of Azeca in 1139 ? She sent a letter to the officer in command to ask if it was consistent with Moorish chivalry to attack a fortress which was defended only by a female. The Moorish cavaliers acknowledged the justice of the reproach, and sent back for answer the courteous offer that if the Queen would show herself upon the wall they would pay their respects to her and retire. She took them at their

word. They approached, made their obeisance, and at once raised the siege. Nor were the Christian knights behind their Moslem adversaries in this generous rivalry. When Alfonso XI. of Castile won the battle of Tarifa he found two daughters of a Moorish prince among the spoils of victory. Instead of enslaving them, as he might have done according to the usage of the time, or even holding them to ransom, he sent them back, laden with presents, to their father. He seems to have inspired the Moors with something of the same feeling which prompted the excuse of the Frenchman for having cheered the Duke of Wellington in a Paris theatre: 'though he had beaten them always, he had beaten them like a gentleman.' And so they bore him no malice. And when he died of the plague at Gibraltar in 1350, after a career of warfare in which he was almost always victorious, the Moorish knights of Granada put on mourning for him, saying that 'there had died one of the noblest princes in the world, one that knew how to honour all good men, whether they were friends or enemies.'¹

All this is very pleasant to read, and one seeks in vain for any similar traits of character in the history of the Turks.

But there is unfortunately another side to the picture. Under the fair surface of Moorish life lay the cancer of Islam, mitigated indeed, but never subdued, and when suppressed in one spot, breaking out with increased virulency in some other part of the body. Saint-Hilaire has acutely remarked on the 'singular fact that Arabia itself has never been the theatre of that new glory' which irradiated the Arab rule in Spain and

¹ Conde, *Historia de la Dominacion de los Arabes en España*. Nueva edicion; iii. p. 284.

Sicily. And he gives the explanation of the fact when he adds that 'Arabia seems satisfied to be the inviolable asylum of the Mussulman faith. Mecca and Medina continue to be holy cities, and to this day the unbelievers are under the ban of exclusion from that sacred soil.'¹ In other words, the Arab's capacity for improvement is in an inverse ratio to his proximity to the heart of Islam. In Spain the virus of Islam circulated through his system at a distance from the source, and mingled with a variety of counteracting influences which served to keep it in check. The Arab domination, it is important to bear in mind, never embraced the whole of Spain. The Moors drove the Christian knighthood from the fertile plains; but the latter took refuge among the Asturian hills and the Pyrenees, where, invigorated by the air of the mountains and a life of hardship, it recruited its enervated energies. From those heights the beaten Spaniards looked down upon the smiling valleys and fruitful vineyards of their forefathers, now in the hands of the infidel spoiler, their churches turned into mosques, and the crescent glittering where the cross had been. From a defensive warfare they began to assume the offensive, and wrested their native land, step by step, from the grasp of an enemy which carried in the religion he professed the seeds of inevitable decay.

This constant warfare between enemies who respected each other reacted favourably on both. 'It could not but happen that each should contract somewhat of the peculiarities natural to the other. The Spaniard acquired something of the gravity and magnificence of demeanour proper to the Arabian; and the

¹ Mahomet et le Coran, par J. Barthelemy Saint-Hilaire, p. 225.

latter relaxed his habitual reserve and, above all, the jealousy and gross sensuality which characterise the nations of the East. Indeed, if we were to rely on the pictures presented to us in the Spanish ballads or *romances*, we should admit as unreserved an intercourse between the sexes to have existed among the Spanish Arabs as with any other people of Europe. The Moorish lady is represented there as an undisguised spectator of the public festivals; while her knight, bearing an embroidered mantle or scarf, or some other token of her favour, contends openly in her presence for the prize of valour, mingles with her in the graceful dance of the Zambra, or sighs away his soul in moonlight serenades under her balcony. Other circumstances, especially the frescoes still extant on the walls of the Alhambra, may be cited as corroborative of the conclusions afforded by the *romances*, implying a latitude in the privileges accorded to the sex similar to that in Christian countries, and altogether alien from the genius of Mahometanism.¹

I have quoted this passage from Prescott because he writes with a strong sympathetic bias in favour of the Moors. Yet even he is obliged to admit that in so far as the Mussulmans of Spain had imbibed the spirit and rivalled the brilliancy of Western civilization they were acting in a manner ‘altogether alien from the genius of Mahometanism.’ The Moorish civilization was in fact an exotic which withered precisely in the degree in which Islam was able to assert itself. ‘This combination of Oriental magnificence and knightly prowess,’ says Prescott elsewhere, ‘shed a ray of glory over the closing days of the Arabian empire in Spain, and

¹ Prescott, Ferdinand and Isabella, vol. i. p. 294.

served to conceal, though it could not correct, the vices which it possessed *in common with all Mahometan institutions.* ‘A familiar intercourse with the Europeans served to mitigate in the Spanish Arabs some of the more degrading superstitions incident to their religion, and to impart to them nobler ideas of the independence and moral dignity of man than are to be found in the slaves of Eastern despotism.’ ‘Notwithstanding the high advances made by the Arabians in almost every branch of learning, and the liberal import of certain sayings ascribed to Mahomet, the spirit of his religion was eminently unfavourable to letters. The Koran, whatever be the merit of its literary execution, does not, we believe, contain a single precept in favour of general science.’¹

This is a severe judgment from so friendly a critic as Mr. Prescott; but it is a judgment which every candid writer who has gone below the surface of Islam, and written unbiassed by a preconceived theory, is constrained to deliver. In the first volume of what promises to be a most important work on the history and genius of Islam the learned author gives the same explanation, which I have offered above, of the fitful gleam of splendour that served to conceal for a while the real nature of Islam in Spain and Bagdad. The passage is worth quoting:—

‘When Islam penetrates to countries lower in the scale of humanity than were the Arabs of Muhammad’s day it suffices to elevate them to that level. But it does so at a tremendous cost. It reproduces in its new converts the characteristics of its first—their impenetrable self-esteem, their unintelligent scorn, and

¹ Ferdinand and Isabella, vol. i. pp. 296, 298, 299.

blind hatred of all other creeds. And thus the capacity for all further advance is destroyed; the mind is obstinately shut to the entrance of any purer light. But it is a grievous error to confound that transient gleam of culture which illuminated Baghdad under the first Abbaside Khalifs with the legitimate fruits of Islam. When the Arabs conquered Syria and Persia they brought with them no new knowledge to take the place of that which had preceded them. Mere Bedouins of the desert, they found themselves all at once the masters of vast countries with everything to learn. They were compelled to put themselves to school under the very people they had vanquished. Thus the Persians and Syrians, conquered though they were and tributary, from the ignorance of their masters retained in their own hands the control of the administrative machinery. The Abbaside Khalifs were borne into power by means of a Persian revolution, headed by a Persian slave. Then began the endeavour to root the old Greek philosophy and the deep and beautiful thoughts of Zoroaster on the hard and barren soil of Muhammadanism. It was an impossible attempt to make a frail exotic flourish on uncongenial soil. It has imparted, indeed, a deceptive lustre to this period of Muhammadan history; but the orthodox Muhammadans knew that their faith and the wisdom of the Greeks could not amalgamate, and they fought fiercely against the innovators. Successive storms of barbarians sweeping down from the north of Asia tore up the fragile plant by the roots and scattered its blossoms to the winds. The new comers embraced the creed of the Koran in its primitive simplicity; they hated and repudiated the refinements which the Persians would fain have engrafted on it. And they won the day. The

present condition of Central Asia is the legitimate fruit of Islam ; not the glories of Baghdad, which were but the afterglow of the thought and culture which sank with the fall of the Sassanides and the expulsion of the Byzantine emperors. So also in Moorish Spain. The blossom and the fruitage which Muhammadanism seemed to put forth there were, in fact, due to influences alien to Islam—to the intimate contact, namely, with Jewish and Christian thought. For when the Moors were driven back into northern Africa, all that blossom and fruitage withered away, and northern Africa sank into the intellectual darkness and political anarchy in which it lies at the present time.’¹

To this must be added the undoubted fact that even in Spain ‘the blossom and fruitage’ of Moorish sway were too often nothing better than the ‘skin and film’ which covered an ‘ulcerous sore.’ Let us take a few tests ; and let us, in the first place, see how it fared with the Christians who remained in the territories subdued by the Moors. The nobles and landed proprietors, unlike those of Bulgaria and Bosnia, refused, with scarcely an exception, to purchase by apostasy the enjoyment of their privileges and estates, and were

¹ Islam under the Arabs, by Robert Durie Osborn, Major in the Bengal Staff Corps, pp. 93–4. I have only just made the acquaintance of this most interesting and able work. The present volume traces the progress of Islam from Mecca to Delhi, and is to be followed by two other volumes, the first of which will deal with the Kalifs of Bagdad, and the next with Islam in India. When the work is complete it will fill up a gap in the history of Islam. Major Osborn’s object is to trace the influence which the religion of Mahomet has exercised on the history of Mahometanism ; and he brings to his task much learning, a thoughtful mind, and a clear and readable style. I am happy to find my own opinion of Islam confirmed by so competent an authority.

consequently driven, as already stated, into the mountainous districts, from whence they maintained, with varying fortunes, an incessant warfare against the Moorish invaders. The poor, however, and many of the middle classes submitted to the Mussulman rule on the usual conditions, namely, the payment of tribute in return for such liberty and toleration as the law of Islam allowed. Those who wish to know the nature and degree of that liberty and toleration may consult the pages of Dozy,¹ a Leyden professor who has said all that can be said in favour of the Moors, and whose testimony, therefore, as well for its learning as its candour, may be accepted implicitly when he exhibits the reverse side of the picture.

In matter of fact, then, the Christians of Moorish Spain enjoyed very little, if any, more religious toleration than the Christians of Turkey do now. ‘The Church,’ says Dozy, ‘was subject to a hard and disgraceful servitude.’ The right of convoking Councils as well as nominating bishops, which had belonged to the Visigoth kings, were now claimed and exercised by the Arab sultans; ‘and that fatal right,’ says Dozy, ‘confided to an enemy of the Christian religion, was for the Church a source of inexhaustible evil, of opprobrium, and of scandal.’ Whenever a Moorish prince wished to squeeze money out of the Christians or to make use of them in any other way, he put the ecclesiastical machinery in motion by immediately calling a Council. At first the bishops, to their credit be it recorded, refused to give the sanction of their presence to these synods; and then the Sultan sent Jews and Mussulmans to take their place and do his bidding.

¹ *Histoire des Musulmans d’Espagne*, par R. Dozy. The work is in four volumes, and is considered of standard authority.

The next step was to put more pliant tools into the Episcopate; and for that reason, as well as for the purpose of getting money, vacant bishoprics were put up to the highest bidder. It was not necessary that these pseudo-bishops should even profess to believe in the Christian faith. The form of consecration was sacrilegiously gone through, and the miscreants took possession of their flocks and began forthwith the process of fleecing them. 'In this way,' says Dozy, 'the Christians saw their dearest and most sacred interests entrusted to heretics; to libertines who took part in the orgies of Arab courtezans even during the solemnities of Church festivals; to unbelievers who publicly denied a future life; to wretches who, not satisfied with selling themselves, sold their flocks into the bargain.'¹

There is, in truth, such a family likeness in the conduct of Mussulman governments towards their non-Mussulman subjects that the history of one Mussulman country is, in this respect, the history of all. The following incident, for example, though it is nine centuries old, reads like an extract from some Consular Report or recent book of travels in Turkey. The revenue officers in Malaga suspected, on a certain occasion, that the amount of the capitation tax collected in that district was much smaller than it ought to have been. Accordingly the bishop, Hortegesis by name, was told to find out the exact number of his flock. He readily agreed, and hit upon the following stratagem. When the time of his annual visitation came round he gave out that he was particularly anxious to get the names of all the Christians in his diocese in order that,

¹ Hist. tom. ii. p. 47.

seeing them on a roll before him, he might have the satisfaction of praying for the individual sheep of his flock. The Christians, suspecting no guile on the part of their chief pastor, fell into the snare, and found their taxes suddenly doubled.

During the first few years of their domination the Arabs observed with tolerable faithfulness their treaty engagements with the subject Christians. But as their power became established, breaches of faith became more frequent and more glaring. At Cordova, for example, the Christian churches were all destroyed by the Moors with the exception of the cathedral, which was dedicated to S. Vincent.¹ The possession of this was solemnly guaranteed to the Christians by treaty. For a few years the engagement was observed; but on the arrival of a number of Arabs from Syria, the mosque accommodation of Cordova was found to be insufficient, and the Christians were unceremoniously

¹ The Arab historians, indeed, glory in the destruction of Christian places of worship in Spain, as the readers of Conde and of Pascual de Gayangos will hardly need to be reminded. Conde, in fact, does not profess to do more than compile a continuous narrative from Arab writers (tom. i. Prologo, p. xx.); Gayangos's 'History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain' is simply a translation from the Arabic of Ahmed Ibn Mohammed Al-Makkari. One of the Moorish generals, says this writer (tom. i. p. 291), 'sent forward some of his troops, who reached the rock of Belay (Pelayo), on the shores of the Green Sea, destroying on their way all the churches, and breaking all the bells. The Christians surrendered everywhere, and asked humbly for peace, which was granted on condition of their paying tribute. The Arabs inhabited the towns deserted by the Christians; for whenever any of the invaders, whether an Arab or a Berber, received orders to settle in a spot, he not only approved of it, but established himself with his family in it without reluctance; by means of which the words of Islam spread far into the country, and the idolatry of the Christians was destroyed and annihilated.'

ordered to give up half of the cathedral in order that it might be turned into a mosque. A few years later they were forced to relinquish the other half in return for a pecuniary consideration. In fact, the Moors broke one by one all their promises to the Christians. Even the sons of Witiza, by whose aid the Moors had obtained their first footing in Spain, experienced ere long the perfidy of their foreign patrons, who confiscated their property, although secured by treaty, on the plea that a Christian could not be allowed to hold so much land. 'Other treaties,' says Dozy, 'were modified or changed in a manner altogether arbitrary.' At the instigation of the doctors of the law, who insisted that the Christians had been let off too easily, extraordinary taxes were laid upon them which, as early as the ninth century, had reduced them to a state of pitiable poverty. 'In short,' says Dozy, 'that happened in Spain which has happened in all countries which the Arabs have conquered: their dominion, mild and humane at its commencement, degenerated into an intolerable despotism. In the ninth century the conquerors of the Peninsula followed to the letter the coarsely expressed advice of the Kalif Omar: 'We ought to eat up the Christians, and our descendants ought to go on eating them up as long as Islam endures.'¹

Under the pressure of these cruelties numbers of Christians, from time to time, professed the Mahometan faith; but most of these remained Christians at heart. Both Fleury² and Dozy give a harrowing account of their sufferings. The profession once made, there was no possibility of return. It might be in a moment

¹ Dozy, ii. p. 50.

² Fleury, Hist. Eccles., tom. x. livre 49.

of weakness, of despondency, of frolic, or in the agony of torture inflicted for the crime of not having sufficient money to pay the tax;¹ but Islam once embraced, there was for the unhappy renegade no door of hope, no place of repentance, however acute the stings of remorse might be. And the children and descendants of these renegades had to suffer for ever for the sins of their ancestors. In most cases the crypto-Christian parents had their children baptized, and brought them up secretly in the Christian faith; and they were sometimes detected by suspicious Mussulman eyes making the sign of the cross furtively while bowing in the House of Rimmon. The loyalty of the renegades and their descendants was thus never thoroughly trusted by the Moors, and they were consequently subjected to all sorts of annoyances and disabilities. They were excluded from all lucrative posts, and from all participation in the government of the country. In social life and on public occasions they were treated with studied insolence.

The renegades, however, did not resign themselves quietly to this oppression by a people whom they regarded both as usurpers and as an inferior race. They formed, moreover, the majority of the population,² and if they could only have organized their forces they might have driven the Moors out of the country. They made the attempt, indeed, more than once, aided by the Christians; but from defective organization, or the betrayal of their designs before they were ripe for execution, these insurrections proved always abortive, and were generally suppressed in the Bulgarian fashion. In a demonstration on the part of the Christians and

¹ Dozy, ii. p. 51.

² Dozy, ii. p. 53.

renegades of Cordova, for example, against an unpopular governor, thousands of them were slaughtered like sheep. Three hundred of them were impaled alive, with their heads downwards, in rows along the banks of the river; and the survivors, twenty-three thousand in all, exclusive of women and children, were bidden to quit Spain within a period of three days, on pain of crucifixion to any who should be found lingering after the expiration of that term. This ruthless decree was rigorously carried out; ¹ a fact—and there were many like it—which ought to be taken into account when judgment is passed on the final expulsion of the Moors from Spain. Then, as now in Turkey, the Jews, being less numerous and therefore less dangerous than the Christians, were not so constantly exposed to outrage and massacre. But in all other respects their lot was the same. Some among them held posts of honour and distinction; but the bulk of the Jewish population were exposed to systematic and legalised humiliation, and those who were wealthy to constant plunder.

In truth, the Moorish rule in Spain carried the seeds of dissolution within it, as Mussulman rule always must when the subject race is in the majority, and still more when the majority are not weighted and cramped by the fetters of a religious code which is inimical alike to morality and intellectual progress. The literary activity, which served in later years to throw a halo of romance over the history of the Moors of Spain, is no measure at all of the political and social life of the people. The picture of intestine feuds and chronic misrule which their own historians give do

¹ Dozy, ii. 74-6.

more than justify the assertion of the friendly Prescott that, in spite of their intellectual varnish, the petty principalities which swarmed over Moorish Spain exhibited ‘all the horrors of anarchy and a ferocious despotism.’¹ Let one quotation suffice :—

‘In pursuance of his plans,’ says an Arab historian quoted by Gayangos (Appendix to vol. ii. p. xxvii.), ‘the Christian King never ceased to make incursions into the country of the Moslems, whom he generally found in a state of dissension and internal discord, and fast working their own ruin and destruction. Indeed not only were the different independent chieftains at that time waging unrelenting war against each other, but they would not unfrequently avail themselves of the arms of the Christians to attack and destroy their own countrymen and brothers in religion, lavishing on Alfonso costly presents, and giving him as many treasures as he chose to have, in order to conciliate his good wishes, and to obtain security for themselves and assistance against their enemies. The Christians, perceiving the state of corruption into which the Moslems had fallen, rejoiced extremely ; for at that time very few men of virtue and principle were to be found among the Moslems, the generality of whom began to drink wine and commit all manner of excesses. The rulers of Andalus thought of nothing else than purchasing singing women and slaves, listening to their music, and passing their time in revelry and mirth, spending in dissipation and frivolous pastimes the treasures of the State, and oppressing their subjects with all manner of taxes and exactions, that they might send costly presents to Alfonso and induce him to serve their ambitious projects. Things went on in this way among the

¹ Ferdinand and Isabella, vol. i. p. 310.

rebellious chieftains of Andalus until weakness seized on the conquerors as well as on the conquered, and baseness and vice preyed likewise on the assailants and the assailed. Generals and captains no longer displayed their wonted valour; warriors became cowardly and base; the people of the country were in the greatest misery and poverty; the entire society was corrupted, and the body of Islam, deprived alike of life and soul, became a mere corpse. In the meantime the affairs of the Moslems were administered by Jews, who fed on them as the lion on a defenceless animal, and who filled even the offices of Vizier, Hajib, and Katib, reserved in former days for the most illustrious individuals in the State.’¹

This is the history of Mussulman rule everywhere. So long as the Mussulman is struggling for empire, the inherent viciousness of his religious system is kept somewhat in check by the hard discipline of constant warfare. But no sooner is his rule established than the process of dissolution begins. One may be touched by the story of the last Moorish King of Granada shedding tears over the beautiful city which was so lately his own, as he gazed on its minarets for the last time from a rocky height of the Alpuxarras; but the Spartan rebuke of his mother explains in a single sentence the decline and extinction of the Moorish power in Spain: ‘Good reason is there that you should weep like a woman for what you could not defend as a man.’² When the Mussulman forsakes the camp for the city the inevitable tendency of his religion is to make him an effeminate debauchee. So that, after all, the expulsion of

¹ Cf. *Conde*, tom. iii. cap. xl.

² ‘Razon es que llores como muger pues no fuiste para defenderla como hombre.’—*Conde*, tom. iii. p. 384.

the Moors from Spain did but anticipate the destiny which their own degeneration was rapidly working out for them. They had become utterly effete, and whatever elements of pathos or regret the closing scene in their history may suggest, it is a fallacy to suppose that their banishment was a loss to Spain, as that of the Jews undoubtedly was.

The history of the Mussulman *régime* in Sicily need not detain us long; but it is necessary to touch upon it for the purpose of showing that the fundamental principles of Mahometan rule are always and everywhere the same, whatever variations in matters of detail the circumstances of different countries may produce. The classical work on the Mussulmans of Sicily is Amari's.¹ It is written throughout from a sympathetic point of view. All that can be urged in favour of the Mussulmans is put into clear relief; whatever can be pleaded in mitigation of their misrule is skilfully brought out.² Yet, after all, the impression left is that the condition of the Christians of Sicily under the Arabs differed but little from that of the Rayahs of Turkey. Here is Amari's account of their disabilities:—

‘ They were forbidden to carry arms, to ride a horse, to put a saddle on ass or mule, to build houses loftier or more beautiful than those of the Mussulmans, to adopt proper names in use among the Mussulmans, to use seals with Arabic inscriptions, to drink wine in public, to accompany the bodies of the dead to the grave with funeral pomp or lamentation. Their women were forbidden to enter the baths when Mussulman women were there, and were compelled to retire when

¹ Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia, scritta da Michele Amari, iv vols.

² *E.g.* vol. i. p. 483.

a Mussulman woman appeared. And to prevent their forgetting their inferiority for a moment (*e perchè non si dimenticasse in alcuno istante la inferiorità loro*) the Christians were ordered to place a sign on the doors of their houses and a mark on their dress, to use turbans of a shape and colour different from those worn by Mussulmans, and to wear a girdle of leather or of wool. When they met a Mussulman in the street they had to go off the pavement, and to stand on the entrance or departure of one of the conquering race.'

'After this,' says our apologetic and extenuating author, 'the toleration permitted in matters of religion will appear wonderful.' Let us see what this wonderful toleration was. 'They were only forbidden to build new churches and monasteries, but not to restore those already existing. The Church was forbidden to inherit property. The utmost freedom of worship was permitted in temples and churches; but the Christians were forbidden to make the sign of the cross in public, to read the Bible so loud as to be heard by Mussulmans, to argue with Mussulmans about the Messiah, to make a loud sound with bells or gongs.'¹

Signor Amari's ideas of toleration are somewhat singular. Moreover, he is obliged to admit that even the limited toleration which he thinks so 'wonderful' and 'liberal' was far from being always carried out in practice. One of the Mussulman rulers, for example, ordered every Christian and Jew to wear a white patch on the shoulder, bearing, in the former case, the figure of a donkey; in the latter, that of a jackass. These animals were, in addition, to be pictured on boards nailed to the doors of the Christians and Jews respectively.² In fact, it is evident that Amari regards the

¹ Vol. i. pp. 476-7.

² Vol. ii. p. 56.

so-called 'toleration' granted to the Christians in Sicily as 'liberal' only by comparison with the more grinding intolerance which was the general rule of Mahometan domination. For he goes on to observe that the *Amân*¹ accorded to the citizens of Jerusalem by the Kalif Omar was the rule and model of the terms granted by Mussulman Governments to non-Mussulman subjects 'in all times, making allowance for such modifications as the circumstances or humour of the conquerors may occasionally have caused.' Amari has published the text of Omar's *Amân*, and it may be well to quote it in order to show what toleration really means in the mind of a Mussulman :—

'This is an agreement in writing addressed to Omar the servant of God by the Christians of Syria and Egypt. When you came to us we asked for the *Amân* for ourselves, our children, our goods, and the people of our religion ; in terms of which we stipulate not to build in our towns or their suburbs any new monastery, nor church, nor asylum, nor to repair those which have become dilapidated in streets inhabited by Mussulmans. We agree, moreover, to allow free entrance into those buildings to the authorities and to travellers, and to give food and hospitality for three days to every Mussulman who demands it. We have further agreed to abstain from the following things :—

'To admit into our churches or houses spies who may come to explore the affairs of the Mussulmans ;

'To read the Koran to our children ;

'To encourage conversions to our religion ;

'To dissuade relations who may wish to become Mussulmans.

¹ *Amân* means the terms offered by Islam to 'the people of the book' on condition of their submission without fighting.

‘Moreover we will allow Mussulmans to sit in our assemblies, and on their entrance we will stand up.

‘We will not imitate the shape of their dresses, their caps, or their turbans.

‘We will not use either their names or their surnames.

‘We will not ride a horse with a saddle.

‘We will not carry a sword or any other arms.

‘We will not make use of seals with Arabic inscriptions.

‘We will keep our beards shaved.

‘We will retain the present shape of our garments so far as we are able.

‘We will wear round our waists the *zunnar* (a girdle of leather).

‘We will not make the sign of the cross.

‘We will not open shops in the streets or market-places of the Mussulmans.

‘We will not sound our boards¹ in any town inhabited by Mussulmans.

‘We will not carry tapers or images outside our buildings.

‘We will make no lamentations for the dead.

‘We will not place ourselves near Mussulmans.

‘We will not kindle fires in the streets or market-places inhabited by Mussulmans.

‘We will not shelter slaves belonging to Mussulmans.

‘We will not try to look into the houses of the Mussulmans.

‘We will not build houses higher than theirs.’

Such are the terms which Islam imposed on that

¹ Pieces of wood which the Christians were allowed, as in Turkey at the present day, to beat in lieu of bells.

portion of mankind to which it condescended to grant permission to live. When the propositions of the *Amân* were read to Omar he made two additions: that Christians should never baptize a Mussulman; and that whoever should transgress any of the propositions of the *Amân* should be considered an outlaw, whose life was, *ipso facto*, forfeited.¹ The same conditions were likewise imposed on the Jews.

In short, wherever Islam has reigned supreme it has always exhibited, with insignificant exceptions and variations, the same features which it wears in Turkey: brutal lust, love of cruelty for cruelty's sake, insolent intolerance, and cynical contempt for the elementary rights of humanity. Amari dwells on the Sicilian Mussulman's 'love of his children, his fidelity in friendship, his liberality, his high and generous spirit—rays of love which penetrated even within the walls of the harem.' But, in summing up the whole case, he is constrained to admit that every State which is based on the principles of Islam has within itself the seeds of inevitable death. It is to the 'profound vices of Mussulman society in Sicily' that he ascribes the extinction of the Saracenic *régime*. 'A consumption,' he says, 'seized hold upon the State. The constituent elements of society (*i corpuscoli sociali*) were not held together by love of country or obedience to authority; but everybody did what was right in his own eyes. The Arabic *régime* was in fact born with the germ of premature death, resulting from the character of the conquerors, their imperfect assimilation with the conquered people, the immutability of their laws, the necessity and at the same time the impotence of their despotism, the foreign mercenaries on whom they were obliged to rely,

¹ Amari, i. pp. 477–8.

their confused municipal democracy, their associations for levying tributes of blood, and their general anarchy under the outward garb of an absolute religious and political unity.’¹

Such is the verdict of history all over the world. In its palmiest hour the cruel and immoral system of the Arabian impostor shows

The little rift within the lute,
That by and by will make the music mute.

In Spain and Sicily, in Egypt and Bagdad, we observe the same anarchy, the same deep corruption, the same premonitory symptoms which are visible in Turkey, and which would have destroyed Mussulman domination there ere now if the European Powers had simply stood aloof and left the Porte to contend unaided against the forces, some of them Mussulman, which have on various occasions tried or contemplated issues with the debauched masters of Constantinople.

But what of India? some one will ask. Look at the vigour and splendour of the Mussulman rule in that Empire. Who knows India better than Sir George Campbell, and has he not told us that the Mussulmans of India were in the day of their power as remarkable for their enlightened toleration as for the vigour of their rule? I have an unfeigned respect for the administrative abilities of Sir George Campbell, and for his opinions on subjects which he has really studied. But I doubt whether the political and social condition of Mussulman States in India or elsewhere can be reckoned among those subjects. He has seen Mahometanism at its best in the part of India with which he is most familiar; and he has seen it, above all, shorn of its independence,

¹ I. p. 546.

and compelled to demean itself in accordance with the maxims of British policy and in obedience to the strong and enlightened wills of administrators like Sir George himself. He has made, therefore, as it seems to me, the mistake of supposing that Mahometanism everywhere is the same thing as Mahometanism in India under the thousand checks, direct and indirect, of British rule. Sir George Campbell's opinion is, at all events, in direct antagonism to that of a writer who knows India quite as well as himself, and who has given evidence of having devoted more thought and study to the subject of Indian Mahometanism.* The Mahometans of India, says the learned and delightful author of *The Annals of Rural Bengal*, 'assert that we obtained the Administration of Bengal from a Mussulman Emperor on the understanding that we would carry out the Mussulman system, and that as soon as we found ourselves strong enough we broke through this engagement. Our reply is, that when we came to look into the Mahommedan Administration of Bengal we found it so one-sided, so corrupt, so absolutely shocking to every principle of humanity, that we should have been a disgrace to civilisation had we retained it.' And then he quotes the following passage from Mr. Westland's Report on the District of Jeypor:—

'All the functions of Administration were heaped upon the Collectors of the Land-Tax, and they might do pretty much as they pleased so long as they discharged their revenue. The people were oppressed in order that the landholder might have his rent, and were plundered in order that the landlord's servants might become rich. Complaint against wrong was useless. The landowner or his officer had it entirely in

his own option whether he should listen to it or not ; and the complainant had very little chance of relief, for the oppressor was often the landlord's servant, and the plunderer, even if they took the trouble to trace him, would not find it difficult to make friends with his captors.'

Mr. Hunter himself then continues :—

'The truth is that under the Muhammadans government was an engine for enriching the few, not for protecting the many. It never seems to have touched the hearts or moved the consciences of the rulers that a vast population of husbandmen was set toiling bare-backed in the heat of summer and in the rain of autumn, in order that a few families in each district might lead lives of luxurious ease.' And just, too, as the Turks are wont to employ the most unprincipled and rapacious among the Christians as their tax-gatherers, so the Mussulmans of India employed Hindu bailiffs to deal directly with the peasantry as being more likely to know their ways, and thus be enabled to squeeze more out of them. 'The Hindus, in fact, formed a subordinate Revenue Service, and took their share of the profits before passing the collections on to their Muhammadan superiors. The latter, however, were responsible to the Emperor, and formed a very essential link in the Muhammadan fiscal system. They enforced the Land-Tax, not by any process of the Civil Courts, but by the sharp swords of troopers. Arrears were realised by quartering banditti upon a District, who harried the villages till the last penny was paid up.'

Mr. Hunter is also at direct issue with Sir George Campbell in regard to the question of Mussulman toleration in India. On so vast and populous a terri-

tory it was necessary for the Mussulman minority to employ non-Mussulmans in the service of the State ; but both in the civil and military services they gave them nothing but inferior posts. 'For some time after the country passed under our care the Mussulmans retained all the functions of government in their own hands. Mussulman collectors gathered the Land-Tax ; Mussulman *Fanjdárs* and *Ghátéváls* officered the police. A great Mussulman department, with its headquarters in the Nizam's palace at Murshidabád, and a network of officials spreading over every district in the province, administered the Criminal Law. Mussulman jailors took bribes from, or starved at their discretion, the whole prison population of Bengal. Kázis or Muhammadan Doctors of Law sat in the Civil and Domestic Courts. Even when we attempted to do justice by means of trained English officers, the Muhammadan Law Doctors sat with them as their authorised advisers on points of law. The code of Islam remained the law of the land, and the whole ministerial and subordinate offices of Government continued the property of the Mussulmans.'

On the inveterate and unspeakable immorality which is invariably engendered by Islam Mr. Hunter is equally explicit. Fanaticism and impurity are invariable characteristics of Mahometanism when not under the control of a superior Power. When thus curbed the Mussulman submits to fate, and his fanaticism is only sporadical and occasional. But the impurity remains, though it be not flaunted so openly and defiantly. Colleges for Mussulman students are found to be 'dens of profligacy.' 'Not content with harbouring what Carlyle calls "the unmentionable women," says Mr. Hunter of the students in one of these colleges, 'they

sank into those more horrible crimes against nature which Christianity has extirpated from Europe, but which lurk in every great city of India.’¹

¹ The Mussulmans of India, by W. W. Hunter, B.A. LL.D., of Her Majesty’s Bengal Civil Service. Pp. 160–1, 163–4, 166, 204.

CHAPTER IV.

DR. BADGER ON ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY.

I MUST now notice an argument on the other side, advanced by a gentleman who undoubtedly has a right to speak. In the *Pall Mall Gazette* of the 18th of last December there appeared a long letter headed 'Islam and Christianity in the East,' and bearing the signature of 'George Percy Badger.' The writer began by explaining that he 'had no predilection whatever for the Turk as the representative of the existing Ottoman Empire,' and that he 'entertained no sympathy whatever for the political system of Islam, even apart from its peculiar religious dogmas.' Having made these 'personal statements,' the author proceeds to develop his thesis. He finds 'the minds of a large section of the English people' possessed by an entirely erroneous idea, namely, that 'Islam teaches intolerance towards all those who are without its fold; hence the Turks, being followers of Islam, persecute their Christian subjects.' He assumes—'a very wide concession indeed'—that 'those sympathizers are well acquainted with the doctrines of Islam;' and he 'asks them how it comes to pass that this religion even at the outset made such rapid progress in the East, and has continued to prevail and to advance with such steady strides.' Let me say, in passing, that I see nothing extraordinary in the

rapid spread of Islam in the beginning of its career, considering the circumstances of the time and the means employed; and that I dispute the correctness of the assertion implied in the second part of the question. I find no evidence that Islam 'continues to prevail and to advance with such steady strides' as Dr. Badger assures us. But this by the way. Dr. Badger answers his own question, and his explanation is that the Christianity which Mahomet found existing in the world was so corrupt and idolatrous that mankind, including large portions of Christendom, welcomed the religion of Mahomet in preference to that of Christ. Dr. Badger founds this theory on 'the portrait given of' Christianity 'by Dr. White¹ in his famous Bampton

¹ The author of the 'famous Bampton Lecture in 1788' was not Dr. White, though he delivered it and published it afterwards under his name. The lectures were chiefly written by a Mr. Badcock, then a Dissenting minister, and afterwards a clergyman of the Church of England. Dr. White, who was Professor of Arabic at Oxford, agreed to pay Mr. Badcock 500*l.* for the MS. Mr. Badcock died soon afterwards, and on his sister presenting Mr. White's bond for payment, the latter, with equal folly and immorality, refused to redeem his promise. This led to the affair being published, when the celebrated Dr. Parr immediately laid claim to the most brilliant parts of the volume. The matter was then referred to arbitration; but that also came to a ludicrous termination on the discovery by one of the arbitrators, Dr. Parsons, of Balliol, that he too had 'a very considerable right of property' in the lectures. A similar claim was made by a Dr. Gabriel, of Bath. The upshot of the whole imbroglio was of course the utter collapse of Dr. White's short-lived reputation. Gibbon, naturally enough, went out of his way to praise the 'elegant and ingenious' fraud of the Arabic Professor (vol. iv. p. 187, Milman's edition). The fraud had not then been discovered, and the chief recommendation of the work in Gibbon's mind was doubtless its apology for Mahomet at the expense of the Christianity of the day. After all, it was perhaps not very unnatural that one Arabic impostor should have felt himself drawn to become the apologist of another.

Lecture in 1788,' entitled 'A Comparison of Mahometanism and Christianity.' And then he goes on to fortify his theory by additional arguments out of the storehouse of his own historical lore and personal knowledge. He relates, apparently with much enjoyment, the rapid progress of Mussulman conquest in 'Syria, including Palestine and Jerusalem, Egypt, Northern Africa, Spain.' 'Numerous were the proselytes from Christianity during this period;' 'but we do not read of any converts from Islam. The reason is obvious; wherever the Muslims went they witnessed in the then prevailing worship of the Christians a confirmation of its tenets and features as set forth in the Koran.' 'As with the Arab invasions, so with those of the Tartars and Ottomans during the long interval of eight centuries; large numbers of the Christians embraced the religion of the conquerors, whereas we have no record of any such defection from the ranks of Islam to Christianity. And the reason was doubtless the same; Christianity with the subjected peoples had lost its vital energy, and had been replaced by an ostentatious sensuous worship, and a ceremonial system which the Muslims could only regard as idolatrous and degrading to the most High God.'

Such is the remarkable theory of a writer who sneeringly grants to those against whom he writes 'a very wide concession indeed,' namely, that they 'are well acquainted with the doctrines of Islam.' It seems to me that a concession at least as wide must be made on behalf of Dr. Badger, if this letter is to be taken as an index of his 'acquaintance with the doctrines of Islam.' Here is a writer who volunteers to instruct the British public on the causes which conduced to the spread of Islam, and he can offer no other explanation

of conversions to Islam and non-conversions from it than the repugnance of the Moslem and Christian alike to the Christianity of the time. Does Dr. Badger then not know that wherever Islam has wielded an independent sway it has always been death for the Mussulman to change his religion? Does he not know that the most effectual Moslem argument for converting Christians has been outrage, torture, and often the alternative of death? Let him read the Blue Books on the Syrian massacres published in 1861, and he will find that arguments of this sort proved too strong for much Christian flesh and blood in the Lebanon. In the preceding pages I have supplied sufficient evidence of the methods of persuasion by which Islam was propagated; and when Dr. Badger has had time to study more trustworthy authorities than the sparkling charlatantry which Dr. White had the dishonesty to publish as his own, he will doubtless be able to give an explanation of the spread of Mahometanism more consistent with the facts of history and with 'the doctrines of Islam' than 'the famous Bampton Lecture in 1788.'

Dr. Badger's sneers will hardly persuade scholars that his acquaintance 'with the doctrines of Islam' is more extensive or accurate than Sir W. Muir's. 'The progress of Islam,' says the latter, 'begins to stand out in unenviable contrast with that of early Christianity. Converts were gained to the faith of Jesus by witnessing the constancy with which its confessors *suffered* death. They were gained to Islam by the spectacle of the readiness with which its adherents *inflicted* death. In the one case conversion often imperilled the believer's life; in the other, it was for the most part the only means of saving it.' ¹

¹ *Life of Mahomet*, p. 258, New Edition.

But Dr. Badger does not confine his criticism to the past. He has lived and travelled much in the East. He has seen Islam and Eastern Christianity face to face, and under a variety of aspects. He has scrutinised the conduct of Christian and Mussulman alike, and seen their doctrines respectively tested by practice. And here is his deliberate judgment. ‘The Eastern Church at the present day,’ he says, ‘is much what it was in the seventh century.’ The Christians, ‘taken as a whole, are not superior to their Turkish rulers either in morals or manners, and, with slight exceptions, scarcely any intellectual progress has been made among them.’ ‘Talk about persecutions! those perpetrated by the Christians far transcend those of the Muslims, and in these latter times there can be no doubt that the political intrigues of Russia were the mainspring of the Bulgarian atrocities.’

Here, then, we have a distinct issue raised by a gentleman who knows the East well, and whose knowledge gives him a special title to have an opinion on the comparative morality of the Mussulmans and Christians of the East. The Christians, he says, ‘are not superior to their Turkish rulers in morals or manners,’ and the persecutions ‘perpetrated by the Christians far transcend those of the Muslims.’ On the other hand, I have now lying before me a book of travels in the East written by an Englishman whose experience is as large as Dr. Badger’s, while his general acquirements are certainly not less extensive; and his account of the matter is altogether different—so different, in fact, that it is only fair to place it before the reader as a counterpoise to Dr. Badger’s. A few extracts will suffice as a sample of the whole book, which extends over 400 pages octavo.

‘They may talk,’ says the author, ‘of the Hatticherif, that vain chapter of privileges, in London or Paris, and praise the toleration and justice which it awards to all classes of the Sultan’s subjects; but beyond the immediate eye of the ambassadors this far-famed Magna Charta is no better than a mockery.’ At Mardeen he saw a large number of horses, asses, mules, and even cows, laden with all manner of booty taken from the unoffending people of the neighbourhood by the Pasha’s soldiers. Among the booty ‘were several loads of human heads, and a number of prisoners, of whom some were to be impaled on the morrow.’ The soldiers ‘committed other excesses too horrible to be related. The heart sickens as it contemplates such atrocities; but such is the temper and spirit of the Ottoman Government.’ At another place the author records the misdeeds of a Mussulman potentate, who ‘used the most harsh measures to induce them (Christians) to embrace Islamism, and was the cause of the murder of their bishop.’

At Jezeerah ‘a heavy gloom seemed to pervade the inhabitants. The poor Christians were afraid to open their mouths, and related to us in whispers many sad tales of Bedr Khan Beg’s tyranny and oppression. The Coords, as they walked through the streets or sat in the bazaar, looked upon us with sovereign contempt, and told us by their insolent and haughty bearing that they hated us, as they did all who bore the name of Christ. Their star was yet in the ascendant, and I have no doubt that many of them were even then looking forward with satisfaction and rapture to the projected slaughter of the mountain Nestorians.’

Mohammed Pasha of Mosul was an ignorant tyrant who could not even read. On the refusal of some of

the people under his jurisdiction to pay the excessive taxation, 'several hundreds were totally massacred, and the ears of a large number were cut off and hung up before the gates of Mosul.' 'It is well known that he was in the habit of sending large bribes to the Sultan's ministers, who urged in his behalf the vigour with which he had suppressed anarchy and rebellion and the general efficiency of his rule, whenever any effort was made to remove him from office. . . . He secretly fomented disturbances among the Coords and Nestorians, and was himself the first to convey the intelligence to the Sublime Porte.'

The Yezedees are described by the author whom I am quoting as 'a very industrious race, clean in their habits, and quiet and orderly in their general behaviour.' They are also 'comparatively free from many of those known immoralities which pollute the lives and conduct of Mohammedans.' The Mussulman Pasha of the district, 'instigated thereto by fanaticism and a thirst for booty,' fell upon some of these people, 'burned their villages, carried many of them away captive, and on the mound of Koyvonjuk massacred several thousands in cold blood, who had fled thither hoping that the people of Mosul would offer them a refuge within the city walls. . . . The Yezedees of that district were subjected to the most wanton oppression in order to force them to embrace Islamism. Many underwent imprisonment, stripes, and other indignities, and a few suffered death, rather than renounce their creed; but seven entire villages became the followers of the False Prophet.'

Bedr Khan Beg, already mentioned, in addition to 'a great persecution of the Jacobite Christians of Jebel-door,' whom he forced to work without pay and under

the lash, 'plundered many of their monasteries;' and finished up by 'compassing the death of the Jacobite Primate of Midyât,' whom he caused to be ripped open and to have his heart torn out. The only offence committed by the Bishop was 'his zeal in confirming his people in the Christian faith, and in persuading them to suffer any indignity rather than apostatize, which the Coords were attempting to force them into.' This Bedr Khan Beg is described as kind and liberal towards the Mussulmans; 'but all this side of his character,' says our author, 'was exhibited to his co-religionists, and his bounty was confined to them; towards the Christians his bigotry and intolerance led him to act with fiendish malignity.' In some places 'the bigotry of the Mussulmans is such that the Christian females scarcely ever venture abroad, except to church, and that not more than once a month.'

In fact, a great part of the volume from which I am quoting reads like the reports of Messrs. Baring and Schuyler from Batak. We read over and over again of 'ravages too horrible to be related.' The people of Tehoma heard that the Mussulmans of the neighbourhood were meditating an attack upon them, and applied to the Pasha of Mosul for protection. 'The Pasha took no notice;' but 'the Agha of Tcal' offered 'to protect their women and children pending the expected fray.' The Christians trusted him and placed their women and children under his protection; and the fiend rewarded their confidence by a general massacre. 'Three hundred women and as many children were brutally put to the sword in one indiscriminate slaughter; only two girls who were left for dead on the field escaped to relate the sad tale of this horrible tragedy.' The men were then attacked, and 'after fighting bravely

for two hours gave up the contest ' and were massacred. ' About one hundred prisoners, mostly women and children, were afterwards taken from the houses, which were then fired, as were the trees and other cultivation in the neighbourhood.' This being accomplished, the commander of the troops and the lieutenant-governor of the district took up their stations near one of the churches and had the prisoners brought before them to receive their sentence, which our author gives as follows: ' Make an end of them; the English Consul at Mosul cannot release them from the grave.' And ' an end of them ' was made accordingly. ' A few of the girls, remarkable for their beauty, were spared; the rest were immediately seized and put to death. During this invasion about five hundred Nestorians were murdered, all the villages of Tehoma were destroyed, the churches were razed, the rituals were burned, and the few remaining villagers crossed the frontier and sought safety and support among their brethren in Persia.'

The ' infidel semi-barbarous Government ' of Turkey, as our author calls it, had its attention called to these massacres; but it ' espoused the cause of Bedr Khan Beg, and publicly defended the aggressions of the Coords as a just punishment of the Nestorians for having murdered a whole village of Mahommedans—a base fabrication.'

At Doorri the author was ' kindly received into the house of the Nestorian Bishop of Berwari,' who gave him ' a sad account of his diocese.' I inquired why he did not represent these proceedings to the Mutsellim of Amedia. " Of what use would that be?" said he. " The Governors are all Moslems, and never attend to our grievances, and our persecutors who surround us

only vex us the more for having dared to seek redress.” ‘I spoke to him about the education of his people; to which the poor man replied: “Come, come; we shall be glad to welcome you, our churches shall be open to you, you may establish schools amongst us, and I will see that my people obey you. Perhaps your coming may free us from the tyranny of the infidels; but as for ourselves, we can do nothing. We have barely bread enough to eat; we cannot procure books; we hardly dare worship God in our churches; and what would the Coords say if we were to begin to instruct our children? They have already destroyed by their tyranny more than one-half of the population of this district, and they will not be satisfied until they have entirely exterminated us.”’

In short, nothing has been related in connection with the Bulgarian atrocities which is not matched over and over again in the experiences of the traveller from whom I have been quoting. It is a horrible tale of pillage, massacres, violations, forcible conversions to Islam, and general intolerance towards Christianity. And all these things, let it be remembered, are not exceptional instances of Mussulman barbarity; they are the common and ordinary fruits of Turkish misrule—the fate to which the Christian population of Turkey are exposed every week of their lives. ‘Instances of this sort,’ says our author, ‘go to destroy all hope that the new ordinances will effect any radical reformation in the Turkish Empire.’ All attempts at reformation are ‘nothing more than the putting of a new patch on an old garment: the concessions which they accord may cover the more glaring defects of a bad system for a time, but in the end will make the rent worse; and no traveller in the East, who has looked beyond the surface

of Ottoman rule, whether under the old or new *régime*, can fail to be convinced that it is based upon no fixed principles of justice, or of real anxiety for the welfare of the subject, and is consequently rotten at its very core, and fast falling into decay In fact, the Osmanlis do not possess the materials for administering any other than a despotic form of government, and therefore any attempt made on their part to effect a radical change in their political system will be futile. Their Pashas are generally ignorant and rapacious men; their Cadis or judges are venal to a proverb; their Ulemas are unalterably attached to the old policy, and their soldiers are devoid of one spark of true patriotism.' 'Oh, the withering curse of Islam!' he exclaims, in another place. 'I am convinced that Turkish domination will be a curse, and a heavy curse too, to the Christian mountaineers; and my sincere prayer is that God, in his mercy, will soon break the staff of Mohammedan tyranny and oppression, and free the Nestorians from its baneful slavery. "So let thine enemies perish, O Lord; but let them that love Him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might."'

The author is evidently of opinion that his aspiration, at least as regards Ottoman rule, is likely to be fulfilled ere long. 'It is important to bear in mind,' he says, 'that the Turks have no hold whatever on the affections of the masses in the empire; on the contrary, they are cordially hated, not only by the Christians, but also by the Coords, Yezedees, Druses, and Arabs—that is, by ninety-nine out of a hundred of their subjects, who could overthrow the Ottoman dynasty at a blow.' It is an instinct of self-preservation therefore which prompts the Porte to resist any suggestion to improve the condition of its subjects. The only security for the

governing caste lies in keeping the mass of the population in a state of ignorance, poverty and degradation.

On the other hand, the author gives, on the whole, a pleasing account of the morals of the Christians; and he describes in glowing language the condition of Christianity in the East before Islam swept over it with its blighting curse.

It is obvious, then, that no two accounts of the same facts could be more opposed to each other than Dr. Badger's and that of the traveller from whom I have been quoting. The former accounts for the rapid spread of Mahometanism by saying that it was morally and religiously so superior to the Christianity of the day that not only did it prove more attractive to the heathen, but that even Christians embraced it in multitudes. And the same contrast, according to Dr. Badger, still exists. Islam is even now more tolerant than Eastern Christianity, and the Christians 'are not superior to their Turkish rulers in morals or manners.'

The other traveller, on the contrary, gives a glowing account of Christianity in the East when Mahomet began his career, and accounts for the rapid spread of Mahometanism by its liberal employment of the irresistible argument of physical force—an argument which even now is sometimes successful in converting villages *per saltum*. He also agrees with all well-informed writers in describing the Turks as utterly and incurably depraved—a race whose very presence fills the atmosphere around them with a moral pestilence. And he found them everywhere as bigoted and fanatical as they are venal and impure.

All this is very perplexing; and the perplexity is greatly increased when one looks at the title-page of the volume which so flatly contradicts Dr. Badger, and

finds that the name of the author is George Percy Badger. The reader may satisfy himself by looking at the first volume of a learned work on 'The Nestorians and their Rituals.' He will find all my references on the following pages :—34, 37, 48, 49, 57, 69, 75, 133, 303, 305, 329, 362, 371, 372, 382, 383. The work is out of print, I believe; and it is probable that very few of those who read Dr. Badger's letter on 'Islam and Christianity in the East' had the advantage of comparing the opinions there expressed with the author's previously published opinions on the same subject. Which, then, are we to believe? the Dr. Badger of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, or the Dr. Badger of *The Nestorians and their Rituals*? I believe the latter, because I find his opinions and facts supported by independent testimony, while the somewhat imperious dogmatism of Dr. Badger in the *Pall Mall Gazette* rests on no better authority than the shallow plagiarisms of an Oxford charlatan of the last century. I cannot help thinking, too, that Dr. Badger would have shown better taste if, in the enthusiasm of his fresh conversion, he had expressed less scorn for opinions which were so lately his own, and which have at least this much to recommend them—that they rest on solid and irrefutable facts.

CHAPTER V.

THE LITTLE RIFT WITHIN THE LUTE.

BEFORE advancing further in our argument, let us look back for a moment and see where we stand. The ends for which civilised governments exist I have summed up under four heads: namely, to afford security for life, security for honour, security for religious freedom, and security for property. I have proved by a mass of overwhelming evidence that the Turkish Government fulfils not one of these ends; which means, in fact, that it is a misnomer to call it a Government at all. I have then gone on to show that there are no elements in the case upon which it is possible to build any hopes of regeneration, and that the evil is consequently incurable. The next point in my argument is that the evil, though aggravated and crystallized in the Turk, is inherent in all Mussulman Governments, as proved by their most favourable specimens, namely, the rule of the Saracens in Sicily and Spain.

But I can imagine sanguine or prejudiced objectors saying: We admit your premisses so far. We will not deny that the Turkish Government is all that you have described it. Nor will we deny that the same symptoms, with whatever differences in detail, have been visible in all other Mussulman Governments. Still, and despite all these admissions, we cannot accept your

conclusion, that the evil is incurable and regeneration hopeless. We hold to the truth of the proverb which warns us that 'while there's life there's hope.' In bodies politic as in human bodies we have instances of wonderful recoveries in defiance of the most skilful diagnosis, and therefore we do not yet despair of the recovery of the Sick Man at Constantinople. He has just made an unexpected display of vitality; there is evidently a reserve of latent force in him for which nobody gave him credit; we are disposed to think that the doctors have mistaken his case; and we believe that by means of careful nursing and a judicious application of non-irritating stimulants, the patient may be put on his legs again, and live to do good service to British interests.

I proceed now to show, therefore, that the case before us is not that of a man smitten with a disease of which the doctors have mistaken the nature; but rather that of a dipsomaniac or opium-eater who persists in imbibing the poison which paralyses his limbs and disorders his faculties. The poison of the Sick Man is Islam. Cure him of that, and I will grant that even the Turk may yet be reclaimed. But while he remains a Mussulman his case is quite hopeless. I do not affirm that under no condition whatever could a Mussulman Power discharge the functions of a civilized Government. There is one, and but one, condition under which that is possible. Given a population which is wholly Mussulman, it is possible for it under the Sacred Law of Islam to enjoy security in respect to life, honour, religion, and property. In such a case Islam is doubtless a great improvement upon pagan religions; though even then it binds the State that owns it in fetters which bar all progress beyond a certain

point. But it has this bad distinction among all the religions of the world, that it is the only one which is essentially and professedly anti-human. Islam is the only religion which declares a war of extermination against the whole non-Mussulman world—a war which is implacable and endless except in the case of those privileged religions whose members are allowed to ransom their lives on certain oppressive and degrading conditions.

But when a Mussulman people rules over a non-Mussulman population it cannot possibly govern that population justly. It cannot give it equality before the law. It cannot mix with it. It cannot assimilate it or be assimilated. There is an eternal gulf between the two races which there is no possibility of filling up or bridging over except by burying Islam in it. The inevitable result of course is a state of chronic disaffection on the part of the subject population; and when, as in Turkey, they form the majority, and are, moreover, superior to their rulers in intelligence, in education, in morals, and in capacity of development, it is only a question of time when they will throw off the yoke of the oppressor. They will not submit to it, and they ought not to submit to it, a moment longer than they find themselves in a condition to break it. A Mussulman Government ruling over a non-Mussulman population is thus always and by necessity in the cruel dilemma described by Livy: it 'can neither bear its vices nor their remedies.' It is obliged by an unchangeable constitution to refuse the simple necessities of political life, and its only choice is between starvation and apoplexy.

The Turkish Government, like all Mussulman Governments, is strictly theocratic. It is based on the

Koran, or rather on the authoritative interpretation of the Koran which is enbalméd for ever in the unrepealable dogmas of the Multéka. The Koran itself is bad enough; but it is not necessary to enter into any controversy as to its teaching. We are saved all trouble on that score by the Multéka, the doctrine of which is too clear and incisive to admit of any doubt. Let the reader refresh his memory by looking back on pp. 102–6, and let him remember that the Multéka is an authority binding on every Mussulman, from the Kalif to the beggar, and from which there is no appeal. It has always been the law of every State in which Islam has been supreme.

But the Turkish Government has absorbed into its system more thoroughly than any other Mussulman Government the principles and doctrines of the Multéka. And this it has done through the institution of the Ulema. For some time after Mahomet the Kalifs summed up in their own persons the functions of the pontiff, the lawgiver, and the judge. The Kalif recited the public prayers at the stated hours in the mosque; he made such changes in the civil law—the law of the Koran he could not alter—as he deemed expedient; and he heard complaints and administered justice in person. As the empire of Islam extended, the Kalifs found the discharge of all these offices too much for them, and they had recourse to a division of labours. The reading of the public prayers, except on special occasions, was discharged by deputy, and the administration of justice was gradually resigned into the hands of the Ulemas or authorised interpreters of the Koran. Theoretically Islam has no sacerdotal caste; practically it has a very strict one. Every Mussulman, for example, has in the abstract a right

of private judgment in the interpretation of the Koran; but he falls under the stigma of heresy if he insists on any interpretation at variance with the traditions of which the Ulemas are the acknowledged guardians and expositors. So again with regard to marriage and funerals; every Mussulman is theoretically entitled to perform these rites for himself. But the ceremonies connected with them involve questions of orthodoxy and heterodoxy, and the services of the Ulemas are consequently here also put in requisition. But inasmuch as the precepts of the Koran, with the glosses supplied by the traditional sayings of the Prophet, pervade the life of man in all its departments, the Ulemas naturally obtained footing in private and domestic life. For a time their influence, though great, was informal. But they gradually worked their way into a recognised position, and have been for a long time all-powerful. The extent of their power may be measured by two facts. The vast proportion of the land of Turkey belongs to them, secure from confiscation and taxation; and the administration of justice throughout the empire is in their hands.

Originally the Ulema, like the Kalif, united the religious and the judicial functions. But in process of time the two elements were gradually separated, and the Ulemas were consequently divided into two branches, one of which devoted itself to the interpretation and administration of the law; the other to the superintendence of public worship and the discharge of the official duties of religion.

The formal constitution of the Ulema dates from the time of Mahomet II. Its hierarchy of ranks is admitted by Ubicini to be 'extremely complicated' in its details, and 'little understood even in Turkey;' but its main features are simple enough. It comprehends

three classes of functionaries : the judges, or *Cadis* ; the interpreters of the law, or *Muftis* ; and the ministers of religion, or *Imaums*. Each of these classes is subdivided into several grades, with corresponding titles, upon which it is not necessary to remark more particularly.

At the head of the Ulema is the Sheik-ul-Islam or Grand Mufti. His rank is coördinate with that of the Grand Vizier, and his official salary, independently of perquisites and bribes—an important exception—is about 12,000*l.* a year. All the judges of the Empire are practically appointed by him. Some he appoints directly, without consultation either with the Grand Vizier or Sultan ; and the rest are all appointed on his nomination or through his nominees. The Sheik-ul-Islam and the two Presidents of the High Court of Justice are the only judges who are paid by the State. The rest are paid by a tax of one-fortieth on the expense of all suits submitted to them, and a similar tax on legacies and such transfer of properties as pass through their hands. But the chief part of their emoluments is derived from bribes. Ubicini, for example, mentions the case of a Mollah who returned at the expiration of his year's judgeship, the salary of which was about 800*l.*, with a fortune of 8,000*l.*

It is, moreover, the privilege of the Sheik-ul-Islam to sanction the political acts of the Government with his Fetvah, or sacred *imprimatur*, certifying them to be in accordance with the Koran, and therefore obligatory on the faithful. This is a most important power, for without the Sheik-ul-Islam's Fetvah no legislative act of the Government can take effect. Midhat's constitution would have been invalid without it ; and the fact that it obtained it is of itself a sufficient proof that it was intended to be, as in fact it is, a sham.

This power of veto by the Sheik-ul-Islam may be explained as follows. ‘Spiritual power in Islam,’ Ubicini truly observes, ‘begins and finishes with Mahomet.’ There is no hint of spiritual succession in the Koran, and Mahomet himself carefully excluded any such idea when he was asked to appoint a successor. He professed to be the last and greatest of the Prophets, and as such incapable of having either a successor or representative. And, as a matter of fact, the early Kalifs never pretended to occupy any such position; nor, indeed, does the Sultan make any such pretension now. He could not, if he would, for such an assumption is repugnant to the Sacred Law. Here are the qualifications of the Kalifate, as laid down in the *Multéka* :—

‘The Supreme Head of the Mussulmans must profess the doctrines of the Koran; have attained his majority; be of sound mind, of the masculine gender, and a free man. He is the depositary of the Sacred Code and the guardian of the Canon Law. He presides over public prayer on Fridays and at the two festivals of the Bairam. Entrusted with the general guardianship of the faithful, he alone has the right of appointing all public officers, administering the finances, commanding the armies, making war and peace, watching over the safety of the State, and maintaining public order; in a word, of governing the Empire.

‘The person of the Sovereign is sacred and inviolable; his supreme magistracy and his absolute superiority over the whole social body place him above the penal laws, and consequently beyond punishment.

‘He is forbidden, however, to make the slightest change in any part of the canonical legislation, more particularly if such change, by its nature and object,

should tend to alter the condition of the nation—of the servants of God confided to his care and protection.’

The Kalif must also ‘be of the blood of the Koreïshites;’ but this is explained to mean no more than ‘that he be not of another race.’

The Kalif is, in fact, merely the chosen delegate of the faithful, as indeed the Multéka calls him; and he is under the Law, never above it. He is to be obeyed so long and so far as he conforms to the *Cher’iat* or Sacred Law. The moment he transgresses it, his subjects have not merely the right, it is their bounden duty, to disobey him. And if he continues to transgress he may be deposed, but only under the sanction of a Fetvah from the Sheik-ul-Islam. This was exemplified in the deposition of the last two Sultans. On the other hand, the Sultan may depose the Sheik-ul-Islam, and has done so several times of late. But he is bound to appoint another at once out of a limited number. So that by getting rid of the Sheik-ul-Islam he cannot get rid of the Law.

In fine, we have in Islam an infallibility as dogmatic as that of Rome since the Vatican Council, and much more rigid. The infallibility of Rome is that of a living voice. You may convict it of logical and historical contradictions and inconsistencies; but *solvitur ambulando*. While you are arguing the organ of infallibility moves on, and leaves you to pick as many holes as you like in his new decree. But the Infallible Pontiff of Islam has been dead for centuries, and he has no successor. What seemed to him good to decree twelve centuries ago for the guidance of rude and ignorant Arabs must rule for ever the conduct of his followers; and the inviolable sanctity of his decrees is guarded by a most powerful and wealthy corporation whose

interest it is to prevent the introduction into the Empire of European culture and civilization. 'It is easy to understand,' says Ubicini,¹ 'that a body so powerfully organized' as the Ulema, 'which has centred in itself all the vitality of Islamism, and achieved the formation of a sort of aristocracy, in a country where privileges are unknown, must be opposed to all ideas of reform, which would be the utter ruin of its power.'

In the course of some conversation with Dr. Döllinger, soon after the Vatican Council, I remember asking him whether he thought it likely that the successor of Pio Nono, if so disposed, would be able to make any great change in the policy of the Vatican. 'My dear friend,' he replied, 'the thing is impossible. The Curial system has been the growth of centuries, and it will take many a reforming Pope to introduce any material change. That the Vatican Council is the highest tide-mark of Ultramontaniam, and that the tide is on the turn, I cannot allow myself to doubt. The abolition of the Temporal Power is a good beginning. The Eternal City, as it becomes more and more secularised, will be less and less regarded as the capital of Catholic Christendom; and in proportion to the degree in which that change progresses will the Curial system be seen to be an anachronism and an incubus. But the system is so complex, is made up of so many wheels within wheels, and has the whole Episcopate so completely in its toils, that the change, which I believe to be inevitable, will take a long time to accomplish. Philoctetes has received his wound; but it is impossible to predict the hour of his death.'

Whatever truth there may be in Dr. Döllinger's

¹ Vol. i. p. 84.

observations as regards the Vatican, they are certainly very applicable to the theocratic Government of Turkey. Within the circumference of the Turkish Empire the Ulema is a much more powerful body than the Roman Curia is in the Roman Catholic Obedience. It is in fact very nearly what the Roman Curia was in the Papal States before the abolition of the Temporal Power. The whole of the religious organization of the country and the entire magistracy are under its direct control; and by its power of veto in the sphere of legislation it commands also the political situation. Its internal organization, too, is at least as complex as that of the Curia, and its various articulations have been welded into a compact and subtle system by ages of experience. It is at once a political and religious corporation, formidable both from its recognised position and privileges and from its enormous wealth. It is also a secret society, stretching its *tentacula* all over the Turkish Empire. But it differs from the Roman Curia in one essential point. Its authority does not extend all over the world of Islam as that of the Curia does over the world of Roman Catholicism. Neither the Sheik-ul-Islam nor the Sultan, nor both together, wield, out of the Turkish dominions, any authority analogous to that exercised by the Pope within the sphere of the Roman Obedience. Islam, properly speaking, has no head. It has a 'Leader' (Imaum), or Commander of the Faithful; but he holds his office by election or by legal settlement, and not in virtue of any *jus divinum*. Islam has also its President Interpreter in the Sheik-ul-Islam or Grand Mufti; but neither does his office rest on any theory of divine right. He is more like the General of a religious order, and usually consults the principal members of the Ulema before granting his

Fetvah on important occasions. Thus the question whether Christians should be allowed to bear arms was submitted to the Sheik-ul-Islam last summer, and it was only after consultation with the general body of the Ulema that he issued his peremptory Fetvah in the negative, on the ground that such permission was forbidden by the Sacred Law.

The unity of Islam, therefore, is a unity altogether different from the unity of the Papacy, or indeed from any rational conception of Christian unity. The theory of Ultramontaniam, as I understand it, is that the living organ of infallibility may increase *ad libitum*—for the Pope is himself the ultimate tribunal of appeal—the stock of Christian dogma; increase it, that is, in its matter as well as in its form. It is the province of the Pope to propound new truths; not merely to define old ones: to discover *lacunæ* in the Christian Revelation, and to assign to each its appropriate dogma.¹ What others consider the true Catholic view is, that the whole body of Christian credenda was ‘once for all delivered;’ the province of the Church being limited to the task of guarding the deposit, when circumstances required it, by fresh definitions. But those definitions were not intended, nor were they understood, to add anything to the *bulk* of their contents. In other words, fresh dogmas, like the Homoöusion or Theotokos, were intended to make truths already received clearer, not to add to their number. On the other hand, both Ultramontanes and their opponents agree in excluding all that comes

¹ The Arian controversy, says Dr. Newman in an eloquent passage, ‘discovered a new sphere, if we may so speak, in the realms of light, to which the Church had not yet assigned its inhabitant.’—*Essay on Development*, p. 405. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception at last tenanted the vacant throne.

under the name of discipline from the sphere of Christian dogma, as belonging to the region of contingent and variable matter. They are thus free to adapt themselves to circumstances; to advance with the tide of human affairs, guiding or moderating its tendencies as the case may be.

But Islam is a crystallisation, not an organism; and its unity is that of a *vis inertiae*, not of a living body. It is powerful as an instrument of destruction when wielded by a capable arm; but it admits of no development or growth. It rests on the principle of immutability, not in the sphere of faith alone, but also in its political and social institutions; and this must necessarily prove fatal to it, sooner or later, when it comes in contact with civilized and self-modifying States. It has been fatal to it in Spain, in Sicily, in Hindustan; and would have destroyed it long ago in Turkey if the mutual jealousies of the Great Powers had not arrested the process of decomposition. The institutions of every Mussulman State are of necessity built upon the Koran; and the Koran being the last expression of the Divine Will, reform is not only superfluous, but presumptuous and impious in addition.¹

Thus we see that the Koran is bound to destroy, in the long run, every State which is ruled by it; and Turkey is ruled by it more systematically and more irretrievably than Mussulman States in general have been.

Another point for consideration is the influence of Mahomet himself on his followers in succeeding generations. He is the Pattern Man of the Mussulman world,

¹ 'L'ultima edizione de' comandi del Creatore scritta ab eterno; recitata a brani dall'angiolo Gabriele all'apostolo illiterato, il quale venia ripetendo la rivelazione, e si chiamolla *Korân*, ossia lettura.'—Amari, *Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia*, vol. i. p. 51.

and occupies practically much the same place in the thoughts of the Moslem which the Pattern Man of Christendom does in the heart of the Christian. He is the Moslem's intercessor with the Most High,¹ and his unique and unapproachable dignity is proclaimed from every minaret in the same breath with the unity of the Eternal God. To speak against God is a sin, but a pardonable one; but to speak against the Prophet is blasphemy which must be expiated by the death of the blasphemer on earth, and his punishment in hell-fire for ever. The laws of morality which bind his followers are relaxed in the Prophet's own favour, and the very angels think it an honour to do him service.

Such being the position occupied by Mahomet in the system of Islam, it is impossible that the characters of his followers should escape the contagion of his example. The votaries of all religions have their characters shaped and moulded by the object of their homage. We grow irresistibly into the likeness of the being whom we reverence and obey, and this general tendency becomes intensified in proportion to the individuality of our ideal, and the place which he occupies in our life. But no religion has ever had a founder of more distinct personality than Mahomet, or one who has impressed his own character more deeply on the polity which he established. To the eye Islam is more closely identified with Mahomet than Christianity is with Christ. The sayings and doings of the Prophet in Arabia centuries ago are the unchangeable rule and pattern of the Mussulman's life for evermore; not his present power and illuminating wisdom (supposing it possible) acting on the spirit of his followers,

¹ 'Plein de confiance dans le secours du Très-Haut, appuyé sur l'intercession de notre Prophète.'—*Hatti-Cherif de Gulhané*.

and guiding them through the tangled maze of changing affairs.

Hence it follows that the character of Mahomet is an important factor in the calculation, when we are discussing the claims of a social and political regeneration for Mussulman Turkey. Now what was the one prominent feature in the character of Mahomet? I do not hesitate to say that it was an imperious, all-absorbing selfishness. Whatever barred his way to the gratification of his passions must be got rid of by violence or treachery; and all means were considered lawful which furthered the ends he had in view. It is not necessary to discuss the relative proportions of sincerity and imposture which formed the staple of his earlier Suras. It is with his character after the success of his enterprise that we have to do. The test of character is not how a man bears himself in the season of adversity and impotence; but how he behaves when he is in a position to put his real motives and principles in practice. Judged by this standard, Mahomet must be pronounced one of the most detestable characters in history. The sword, the dagger, poison and unscrupulous fraud, backed by a commanding will, a persuasive tongue, and rare political capacity,—these were the instruments by which he mounted to power; and he compensated his followers for the few not very trying restrictions which he imposed upon them by the gift of unlimited dominion over the rest of mankind. Like the Tempter of old, he showed them all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and promised to put them in possession of the intoxicating vision, if only they would fall down and swear him an eternal allegiance. Nor, in enlisting them under his banner, did he make any severe demand on

their self-denial. In forbidding the use of wine he denied them a gratification for which they had no special craving; but he not only permitted, he gave, a Divine sanction to the unbridled indulgence of all their characteristic vices. The Arab inherited a supreme contempt for human life: Mahomet bade him gratify it to the top of his bent, on the sole condition that the life sacrificed should not be that of a Mussulman. The Arab was the most vain-glorious of human beings: Mahomet told him that he had a Divine right to his self-conceit, since it was written in the Book of Fate that the Arab race was the predestined ruler of the world and heir of all the ages. The Arab was proud of his language: Mahomet said that it was the language of Heaven, and was consequently so sacred that its use was forbidden to all but the True Believers.¹ The Arab was an inveterate freebooter: Mahomet opened up to him an endless vista of predatory warfare, with spoils in abundance, of all that could fire the fancy, in case of victory; or the refreshing bowers of Paradise, attended by ever-beautiful and ever-youthful black-eyed houris, if he died a hero's death. The Arab practised slavery: Mahomet gave him for bond-slaves as many of the human race as he chose to spare after satiating his lust of carnage. The Arab was grossly licentious: Mahomet gave him leave to take as many wives as he pleased, and concubines without number;² and the crowning delight of his sensual

¹ The strict enforcement of this prohibition was impossible when the Arabs passed beyond the borders of Arabia; but its spirit was observed in the command, still unrepealed, that non-Mussulmans shall not use seals with Arabic inscriptions.

² It has been said by some that Mahomet elevated the position of woman. I fail to see how. He restricted the Mussulman to the use of four wives *at one time*, but he gave him an un-

Paradise is the increased opportunity which it offers for the safe gratification of animal lusts.¹ The Arabs had a shrine of stupid superstition at Mecca : Mahomet consecrated it as the holiest spot on earth, and made the city which was sanctified by the presence of the Kaaba the portal to Paradise.² All this rendered the pretended Revelation of Mahomet very acceptable to the Arabs ; but it pronounced on them at the same time, as Major Osborn truly observes, ‘ a sentence of perpetual barbarism.’³

And Mahomet’s example has been even more pernicious than his teaching. Every vice which he sanctioned in his followers he practised, even beyond the limits of his own precepts, in his person. While he was feeling his way to power and was exposed to persecution he showed, as men in such circumstances are wont to show, a conciliatory disposition, and offered the right hand of fellowship to Jew and Christian. To both alike he said : ‘ Unto every one of you have we given a law, and an open path ; and if God had pleased, He had surely made you one people. But He hath thought fit to give you different laws, that He might try you in that which He hath given you respectively. Therefore strive to excel each other in good works : unto God shall ye all return, and then will He declare unto you that concerning which ye have disagreed.’⁴ ‘ To every

limited right of divorce— that is to say, unlimited right to renew his wives at pleasure. In virtue of this right a grandson of the Prophet managed to enjoy ninety wives in the course of his life, besides concubines.

¹ Al Koran, c. lv. and Sale’s Preliminary Discourse, &c., pp. 69–70.

² *Ibid.* c. xxii.

³ Islam under the Arabs, p. 92.

⁴ Al Koran, c. v.

people God,' he declared, 'had sent a messenger,' and he claimed for himself only a coördinate position with the prophets which went before him. His revelation was an advance upon theirs—that was all. But his pretensions increased with his success, till they culminated at last in a decree of perpetual war against all who refused to accept the Koran. The Jews were the first to experience his vengeance. He had fortified his earlier Suras with spurious quotations from the Pentateuch, which he said contained the same revelation to the Jews which he was commissioned to deliver, in the Koran, to the Arabs. But when he went to Medina, the Jews denounced his quotations as forgeries, and he retaliated by fiercely accusing them of having corrupted and falsified their Sacred Books.¹ Denunciations, however, were not enough. The presence of the Jews, confuting his revelations out of their Hebrew Scriptures, was a standing menace to him; and he took measures, first to silence them, and when that failed, to get rid of them altogether. A Hebrew woman of the name of Asma, who exposed the Prophet and his claims to ridicule in some satirical verses, was soon afterwards assassinated by an agent of Mahomet, who crept into her apartment at midnight and plunged his dagger into her breast as she lay asleep between her little ones. A few weeks afterwards an aged Jew, of learning and ability, was murdered in the same way and for the same crime.

The Jews now took measures to discover the mysterious assassin, and the name of Mahomet was tremulously whispered. This brought matters to a crisis, and Mahomet, taking the bull by the horns, determined to exterminate his enemies. But this was a matter of

¹ Al Koran, chaps. iii., iv.

some difficulty ; for he had concluded a treaty with the Jews of Medina, and the tribe which he wished to destroy, numbering seven hundred men able to bear arms, had scrupulously adhered to the letter and spirit of the engagement. In this dilemma, as in many another, the Archangel Gabriel came to the rescue, and assured the Prophet that if he had reason to fear treachery from the doomed tribe he might 'fairly' put them to death, for they were but 'vile beasts in the sight of God,' and 'God loveth not the treacherous.' On receipt of this revelation the Prophet summoned the whole tribe to embrace Islam without delay, and on their refusal proceeded to besiege their quarter. Their provisions being exhausted, they surrendered at discretion at the end of fifteen days, and Mahomet gave orders to massacre them all in cold blood. On a menacing demonstration, however, from an Arab chief, this savage order was most reluctantly commuted by the Prophet into a sentence of banishment ; but the property of the tribe was appropriated by Mahomet.

Mahomet now gave a general order to his followers to slay a Jew whenever they had the chance of doing so. A number of assassinations followed ; but the Prophet's thirst for slaughter refused to be quenched by the blood of an isolated Jew or Jewess here and there : victims must be offered in hecatombs on the altar of his vengeance. The second of the Jewish tribes in Medina was accordingly banished, after confiscation of their goods ; and Mahomet felt that he could at last deal securely with the only tribe that remained. He had now put down all opposition in Medina, and whatever murmurs there might be in secret, none dared to oppose him openly. He gathered his followers together therefore, and marched stealthily on the

Jews' quarter. But the tribe of Bani Kuraizha had been forewarned, and Mahomet found all the approaches strongly barricaded. He was obliged to have recourse to a blockade. The Jews, feeling their case to be desperate, offered to submit on condition of being allowed to leave Medina for ever. But the Prophet had them now in his power, and the prospect of his long-cherished revenge for their squibs and jeers was too sweet to be foregone on such terms. He insisted on a surrender at discretion. They knew too well what this meant, and a sound of wailing went forth upon the evening breeze from the women of Bani Kuraizha. One of their elders proposed to kill the women and children, to save them from outrage, and then to sally forth against the Moslems and die sword in hand. But the rest could not bear to imbrue their hands in the blood of their own wives and little ones. On the following day, the Founder of Islam sentenced all the men to death and the women and children to slavery. Some of his own people pleaded for mercy; but the squibs of Asma and the elegies of the son of Ashraf demanded a signal expiation, and the Prophet declared that his sentence was but the judgment of the Most High God, pronounced from His tribunal in the Seventh Heaven, and therefore irreversible. The sentence was accordingly carried out. The Prophet himself personally directed the digging of the trenches which were to receive the bodies of the slain. When that was finished the tragedy began. The Jews, with their hands tied behind their backs, were led up in parties of five or six to the fatal trenches, forced to kneel down, and then beheaded. The bodies were then flung into the trenches and covered over. The butchery went on all through the day, and was con-

tinued for some time after sunset under the glare of torches, Mahomet standing by feasting his eyes with the horrid spectacle. The wounded pride of the Prophet was at length appeased by the sacrifice of eight hundred male adult Jews. There remained a thousand women and children, who were reduced to slavery. In accordance with one of his own revelations, two hundred of these were set aside as the Prophet's share, and he sold them into bondage in exchange for weapons and horses, with the exception of one beautiful Jewess whom he retained as a concubine. Her name was Rihána, and neither threats nor the offer of being made one of the Prophet's wives would ever induce her to forsake the religion of her fathers.¹

This will suffice as a sample of Mahomet's petty spite and savage cruelty. The other most prominent trait in his character was unbridled lust. The few restraints which he placed on the sensual appetites of his followers were abrogated, one by one, in his own favour. For him was always reserved the most beautiful of the females taken in warfare; and when he became so powerful and famous that distant potentates wished to conciliate him, they found that the readiest passport to his heart was the present of a beautiful slave. While he was dying a fresh wife, whose charms he had heard extolled, was on her way to his harem at Medina. His followers were restricted to four wives at one time, and were charged not to pass the forbidden degrees in choosing their wives; but the Prophet

¹ Osborn, *Islam under the Arabs*, pp. 65-6; Saint-Hilaire, *Mahomet et le Coran*, p. 173. Muir's *Life of Mahomet*, new Edition, pp. 326-331. 'Mahomet,' says Muir, 'returned from the horrid spectacle to solace himself with the charms of Rihána, whose husband and all her male relatives had just perished in the massacre.'

himself was permitted an unlimited number of wives as well as of concubines ; and the law against incest—an offence abhorrent to the Arabian mind—was suspended in his favour. ‘O Prophet,’ says the 32nd Sura, ‘we have allowed thee thy wives unto whom thou hast given their dower, and also the slaves whom thy right hand possesseth, of the booty which God hath granted thee ; and the daughters of thy uncle, and the daughters of thy aunts, both on thy father’s side and on thy mother’s side, who have fled with thee from Mecca ; and any other believing woman, if she give herself unto the Prophet—in case the Prophet desireth to have her to wife. This is a peculiar privilege granted unto thee above the rest of the True Believers. . . . Fear not to be culpable in using thy rights, for God is gracious and merciful.’ Another revelation announced that he might marry his own daughter-in-law, Zeinab, whose beauty had captivated him, as he caught her, in the absence of her husband, *en déshabillé*.¹

Mahomet is sometimes commended to our favour on account of his faithfulness to Kadijah. But, in truth, he had very little choice in the matter. An Arab could not marry without sufficient means to settle a dowry on his wife ; and Mahomet was penniless when Kadijah took him for her husband. She was careful to keep her property in her own hands ; so that the Prophet had not the means, however much he may have wished, to make an unwelcome addition to Kadijah’s

¹ Koran, c. xxxiii. Cf. Saint-Hilaire, p. 172 : ‘Le monde Musulman était affligé profondément et indigné de cette union, contraire à tous les usages. Mahomet la légitima par un verset du Coran.’ Also Muir’s *Life of Mahomet*, vol. iii. p. 230, where Mahomet’s sickening cant in announcing his spurious revelations of Divine sanction for every fresh development of immorality is justly stigmatised as ‘impious effrontery.’

establishment. But as soon as she was out of the way, and he had the means of indulging his passions, he certainly made up for his previous abstinence, and pushed aside every barrier which stood between him and the objects of his desire.¹

It is surely not surprising, then, that a people whose character is moulded by the example and teaching of such a Pattern Man as Mahomet should treat the world now and then to tragedies like that of Batak. And here lies the vast, the immeasurable difference between the atrocities of Christian and those of Mussulman nations. As a matter of fact, Turkish atrocities have always been distinguished by abominations and by exhibitions of fiendish cruelty which find no parallel in the very worst atrocities which can be exhumed out of the histories of the various nations of Europe. But even if this were not so, there would still be no real analogy between the misdeeds of Turkey and those of any part of Christendom; or indeed, though in a lower degree, of any part of the non-Mussulman world. It is curious that men, who are clear-headed enough on other subjects, seem unable to see this vital distinction. Look, for instance, at the following passage which I quote from the *Pall Mall Gazette* of February 14:—

‘The blackest of the sins of Turkey cannot be for a moment compared with those which France appeared to all men to have committed in a year or two after the first Revolution. The gravest of the permanent defects attributed to the Turkish administration are trifles as

¹ ‘Il s’abandonna sans mesure à ses passions.’—*Saint-Hilaire*, p. 117. Cf. Osborn, p. 35; and Muir, p. 528. On one occasion he put the chief of a Jewish tribe to an inhuman death in order to possess himself of his beautiful wife (Muir, p. 391). It is hard to restrain one’s indignation while reading some recent panegyrics on this paragon of cruelty and lust.

contrasted with the domestic sins which seemed to lie at the door of France—her seemingly wanton destruction of all her ancient institutions and her obliteration of religion and law. If the Turkish misgovernment causes uneasiness to neighbouring States, France, by her example, shook all other European communities to the very centre. If the Turkish irregulars shocked all Europe by their deeds, what feeling could be excited by the torrents of blood which flowed into the sawdust from the guillotine, by “noyades,” “fusillades,” and “Republican marriages”? Yet if there is one opinion which now looks likely to be universally received, it is that, in spite of the apparently overwhelming case against France, she ought to have been left to herself. One fault, and one only, can be attributed to her assailants—that they were led by their indignation to disregard French sovereignty and independence.’

Here we are gravely told that ‘the blackest of the sins of Turkey cannot for a moment be compared’ with the crimes of France during the Reign of Terror. Now what are the facts? The largest estimate of the total number of people put to death in Paris during the Reign of Terror is under 2,000;¹ and the exact figure is probably less than half that number. The lowest official estimate of the massacres in Bulgaria is 15,000; the highest reaches 30,000. The truth probably lies midway between the two. But I may be told that Paris is only a part of France, and that numbers of people were put to death in the provinces. I reply that Bulgaria is only a part of Turkey, and that other pro-

¹ The French victims of the Sicilian Vespers did not exceed 2,000, though that massacre has taken its place among the tragedies of history. See Amari’s *La Guerra del Vespro Siciliano*, vol. i. p. 133.

vinces were the scenes of massacres and outrages as heinous, though not on so large a scale, as those of Bulgaria. Moreover, the French massacres extended over a period of two years. Those which the *Pall Mall Gazette* contrasts with them, to the advantage of Turkey, took place in about as many weeks. The two classes of atrocities, again, were essentially different in kind, both as to their origin and character. The French atrocities were committed by a people who had been grievously oppressed for generations, and who, having at last got the upper hand, were exasperated by the remembrance of past wrongs, and intoxicated by the unexpected power of avenging them. The Bulgarian atrocities, on the other hand, were committed on a defenceless population, whose chief crime was that they had become numerous enough to rouse the fear, and prosperous enough to excite the cupidity, of their brutal oppressors. Lamentable, too, as the excesses of the Reign of Terror were, and cruel as were some of them, they were at least free from that mixture of bestial obscenity and wanton lust of torture for its own sake, which is characteristic of the Turk.

But these, after all, are minor questions. Were the *Pall Mall Gazette's* comparison even as accurate as it is the reverse, it would be simply irrelevant. For the question is not whether other nations have committed atrocities as great as those committed by Turkey, but whether such atrocities are the normal condition of their rule and the necessary outcome of their religious and political system. If the Reign of Terror were still holding carnival in France and governing by means of noyades and the guillotine, I doubt whether even the *Pall Mall Gazette* would be found waving majestically away all who presumptu-

ously stretched out unhallowed hands to touch its *fetish* of 'sovereignty and independence.' Undoubtedly it was a blunder and a crime on the part of other nations to intervene in the domestic affairs of France, for there was no reason to suppose that France was incapable of self-regeneration. Certainly she 'ought to have been left to herself.' She was a homogeneous nation, and her very excesses were those of a wild undisciplined youth running riot in the first paroxysm of freedom from an injudiciously prolonged nonage. With all their faults and all their crimes, the leading men of the Reign of Terror had nothing in common with the venal tribe of Turkish Pashas. They were no ignoble, money-grubbing self-seekers, but patriots driven to frenzy by the stupid and flagitious attempt of neighbouring Powers to rivet again upon their necks the yoke which had cost them so much toil and misery to break. That Liberty in whose name they committed their crimes was not to them a mere pretence, but an intense reality, for the sake of which they would have gladly stretched their necks beneath the fatal guillotine. *Que mon nom soit flétri, pourvu que la France soit libre*, was no mere hyperbole on the lips of Danton; nor ought it to be forgotten that while he was 'Minister of Moloch-Justice,' to quote Carlyle's phrase,¹ he seldom resisted a suppliant's tears for a friend's life, and that no personal enemy of his perished during the Reign of Terror.

In European Turkey the condition of things is altogether different. There you have the real people of the country kept in bondage by a horde of barbarians, whose rule is a chronic Reign of Terror, and must continue to be so while it lasts. The 'independence of

¹ 'French Revolution,' vol. ii. p. 162.

Turkey' means the perpetuation of Turkish misrule. It cannot be otherwise ; for the assertion is not a mere inference from what has been, but an axiom from the nature of the case. When men can gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles, then, but not before, may we hope that the Ottoman Government will do justice to its non-Mussulman population. And the reason is plain, though a certain class of minds refuse to see it. The annals of most Christian nations are unfortunately stained with great crimes. But these crimes are violations of the moral and religious code which the nations in question profess, and on which they ordinarily act. They are things which have to be explained, apologised for, and excused on the plea of extenuating circumstances, such as accident, misunderstanding, great provocation, or dire necessity. They are never defended as right in themselves, never acknowledged as other than evil. The very doers of them would admit that they are blots on a system to which they are essentially foreign. Machiavelli does so frankly, as in the following passage ; and even the *Pall Mall Gazette* would hardly accuse that master of state-craft of being too easily carried away by his feelings.

'Cruelty,' says Machiavelli, 'may be well or ill applied. It may be called well applied (if indeed we may use the term "well" of that which is essentially evil) when it is only exercised once in a way under the necessity of self-preservation, and afterwards converted as much as possible to the benefit of the class who have suffered from it. It is ill applied when it shows a tendency to repeat itself, and to increase rather than diminish with time. Proceedings of the former class are of the nature of a remedy, and have been suffered

to prosper both by God and man. A State which practises the latter cannot continue to live.’¹

In brief. Christian nations have a code of morals which is always higher than their practice, even when it is at its best, and a Pattern Man whose precepts and example are the perfection of all that is true and pure, unselfish and just. The Turk’s practice, on the other hand, is quite abreast of his moral standard, as laid down in his Sacred Law and exemplified in the life of his Pattern Man. What made the case of the Canaanites of old so hopeless was that they did their abominations ‘unto their gods’; so that there was no hope of amendment, morality being corrupt at the fountain-head, without a pure stream anywhere in reserve to draw from. And so it is with the Turks. Their ideal of human perfection was a man who never hesitated to break all laws, human and divine, which barred his way to the gratification of his passions. The laws which regulate the Turk’s domestic life are fitly described by Sir W. Muir as ‘a mass of corruption, poisoning the minds and the morals of every Mahometan student.’ The laws which govern the Turk’s relations with the rest of mankind are emphatically anti-human. And they are all eternal and immutable. In this respect Islam is the most pernicious religion that has ever been professed by any portion of the human race. There may be religions actually more immoral in their precepts and practices, but Islam is the only religion which lies under the doom of being bound for ever in the ceremonies of its founder. He stereotyped to the end of time the ignorance and barbarism of Arabia in the seventh century of our era, and laid this burden as a dogma of perpetual obligation on the minds and con-

¹ ‘Il Principe,’ c. viii.

sciences of his followers to the end of time. What can be expected from a system thus bound and mummified by the immutable mandates of a cruel and licentious Bedouin of the seventh century but that which Islam, when left to itself, has ever exhibited—moral depravity and intellectual stagnation? And this, in a world of progress, means decadence, without possibility of recovery, wherever a Mussulman State attempts to govern a population not similarly handicapped, and which is at the same time too numerous to be exterminated, and too vigorous to be kept permanently in bondage. In every State, therefore, which accepts Islam for its portion there is of necessity what Amari calls ‘the germ of premature decay.’

It is the little rift within the lute,
That by-and-by will make the music mute,
And ever widening, slowly silence all.

Or little pitted speck in garner'd fruit,
That rotting inward, slowly moulders all.¹

‘Setting aside considerations of minor import,’ says Sir W. Muir, ‘three radical evils flow from the faith [of Islam] in all ages and in every country, and must continue to flow *so long as the Corân is the standard of belief*. First, polygamy, divorce, and slavery are maintained and perpetuated; striking at the roots of public morals, poisoning domestic life, and disorganising society. Second, freedom of thought and private judgment are crushed and annihilated. The sword still is and must remain the inevitable penalty for the renunciation of Islam. Toleration is unknown. Third, a barrier has been interposed against the reception of Christianity. They labour under a miserable delusion

¹ Vivien in ‘Idylls of the King.’

who suppose that Mahometanism paves the way for a purer faith. No system could have been devised with more consummate skill for shutting out the nations over which it has sway from the light of truth. . . . The sword of Mahomet and the Corân are the most stubborn enemies of civilization, liberty, and truth, which the world has yet known.' 'To the combination, or rather the *unity*, of the spiritual and political elements in the unvarying type of Mahometan government must be attributed that utter absence of candid and free investigation into the origin and truth of Islam which so painfully characterises the Moslem mind even to the present day. The faculty of criticism has been annihilated by the sword.'¹

How different from the religion of Him, who, leaving his grave-clothes in the tomb which He had Himself abandoned, gave to His followers, not a code of unchangeable rules, but a few vivifying principles which, planted in the soil of humanity, are capable of indefinite expansion and endless adaptability : Himself, meanwhile, standing before the gaze of all as an Exemplar without spot or flaw ; One whom it can never be wrong to imitate and whom it is impossible to imitate without being purified and ennobled by the effort.

¹ 'Life of Mahomet,' pp. 534-5, 575, new edition. The italics in the quotation are Sir W. Muir's.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ALTERNATIVE.

BUT what is to be the alternative? Suppose the Turkish Government destroyed; what then? What do you propose to put in its place? It may be owing to my narrowness of vision, or to my ignorance of political science, but this is a question which it really does not seem to me so difficult to answer as it does to some men who are much abler and wiser than myself. One thing at least is certain: The Turkish Government has reached the nadir of the political firmament. Things cannot be worse than they are, and therefore the chances are that any change would be a change for the better. In saying this I am not forgetful of Lord Salisbury's solemn warning, on the first evening of the Session, that any attempt to coerce Turkey 'would be the signal for confusion and anarchy in every part of the Empire,' resulting in 'a frightful repetition of those terrible scenes of which we have heard so much.' My opinion of Lord Salisbury is such, that when I find myself at variance with him on a question of this sort, my first impulse is to distrust my own judgment, and to believe that he is right. But on this occasion I find my natural impulse in collision with certain facts to which I shall refer in their proper place. Meanwhile I shall, for the sake of argument, assume the correctness of Lord Salisbury's prognostications, and I say that

I am willing to face the calamities which he fears as the price to be paid for the emancipation of the down-trodden populations of Turkey. Turkey *might* repeat, on a large scale, the horrors and abominations of Batak ; but it would be for the last time. She would never again have an opportunity of disporting herself in that way. What, on the other hand, will be the consequence of letting matters take their course? Peace is not yet concluded with Servia and Montenegro, and cannot, if it be, be more than a truce. And what of Bosnia and the Herzegovina? of Bulgaria? of Crete, and Thessaly, and Epirus? The insurrection in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not dead, but in abeyance. It must be put down by force of arms, and the probability is that, before that is accomplished, the conflagration will have spread to other parts of the Empire. The disease of the Sick Man has now reached that stage which makes it reasonable to look for a much more frequent recurrence of its paroxysms. Turkey is financially exhausted. Where is she to find the means of replenishing her bankrupt treasury? The money-markets of the world are closed against her ; and if she is not to die of sheer inanition, she must seek for relief in increased taxation. The reader knows by this time the figure at which the existing taxation of Turkey stands. Does he think it will bear augmentation? Is it possible to doubt that an attempt of the kind will irritate the disaffection of the Rayahs to the inflammability of a tinder, which any casual spark may kindle?

Leave Turkey to her own devices, then. Let the Great Powers stand aloof, abstaining from coercion either out of a slavish regard for ‘the letter that killeth’ of obsolete engagements, or from the more honourable

dread of the events anticipated by Lord Salisbury. What will happen, suppose the Russian Army is demobilised, and the *status quo* restored in Turkey? I venture to predict that twelve months will not have elapsed before the tale of killed and wounded and outraged in the Turkish Empire will have far exceeded the list of victims likely to follow from the coercion of Turkey at the present moment. It is therefore, at the very worst, a choice of evils; and Lord Salisbury's choice—I say it with all respect and deference—is the more dangerous of the two. Coercion, if the worst came to the worst, would at all events dispose of the malefactor, the great disturber of the peace of Europe, once for all. A *laissez-faire* policy lets him loose on society with the certainty that his crimes and misdemeanours will in a year or two make it necessary to set the police on him again, when the question of his coercion, with all its contingencies, will have to be faced anew, probably not under such favourable auspices. ‘Confusion and anarchy in every part of the Empire!’ Why, that is the normal condition of Turkey; and the authors of the ‘anarchy and confusion’ are the Turkish officials and the Turkish army. Destroy the Government, of the two hundred Pashas—the *fons et origo malorum*—arm the Christians, disband the Mussulman army, and I venture to say that in less, probably much less, than two years there will be far more order in Turkey than there is now. Let the band of robbers, who flourish and fatten on the spoils of territories to the possession of which they have never established a righteous claim, be got rid of, and order would gradually rise out of chaos, even without the intervention of any external Power. But I mention this as a *dernier ressort*, and not as a policy to be recom-

mended. It would be preferable to a continuance of the present state of things, because anything would be an improvement on that; but the statesmanship of Europe will hardly confess itself driven to so desperate a remedy. There is at least one Power which has pledged itself before the world to coerce Turkey into obedience to the will of Europe: in concert with the other Great Powers if possible; alone if necessary. They little know Russia who dream that she will retire from the arena before her purpose is fulfilled. Over and over again at the Conference at Constantinople did the Russian Government declare, through the mouth of General Ignatieff and the pen of Prince Gortchakoff, her 'immovable determination to have some sufficient material force as security for the Christians during the introduction of the reforms.'¹

It is not, therefore, a question of Turkey being coerced. The only question is, Who will coerce her? Europe united? Or Russia single-handed? A threat from the former, or from any two of them, with a clear determination to carry it out in case of refusal, would subdue Turkish obstinacy without difficulty, as the threat of France and England, backed by the other Powers, did in 1861. This, however, the fanatical advocates of the 'independence' of Turkey will not hear of; and the alternative is the sword of Russia, which is exceedingly likely to put an end once for all, not to the 'independence' of Turkey, but to Turkey altogether. In one way or another, then, the question of how to deal with the *disjecta membra* of Turkey in Europe is likely to be forced on the attention of the Cabinets before many months are past; and it is well,

¹ Blue Book, No. 2, pp. 50, 147, 169.

therefore, to familiarise our minds with the various plans of settling the Eastern Question which are likely to emerge on the field of political discussion.

The Provinces immediately concerned are of course those which have been the theatre of recent insurrection and outrage—namely, Bulgaria, Bosnia, and Herzegovina. Let us see what elements they possess for self-government, or for some fresh political arrangement.

And first as to Bulgaria. The Bulgarians, we are told, are so ignorant and degraded that they are not fit to govern themselves. This is one of the arguments used by the Turkish Government against the administrative autonomy proposed by the Conference. The Bulgarians, it urged, ‘were, of all the Sultan’s subjects, nearly the least informed and the most devoid of political capacity.’¹ Let us grant the justice of the accusation for a moment, and solely for the sake of argument; and then I ask, Whose fault is it? The Bulgarians have been subject to Turkish rule for five centuries, and if they are now so unruly and brutal that they can only be kept in order by the methods adopted at Panagurishta and Batak, it is high time that they should be delivered from the curse of a yoke which has so degraded them. They enjoyed a high degree of civilization when the Turk conquered them, and he must therefore bear the responsibility of their degeneration. It would be a bad precedent in political controversy to give Tyranny the benefit of its own misdeeds, and to suffer it to produce the evidence of its misrule as a valid title to the right of prolonging it. ‘Behold,’ says the Turkish Government in effect, ‘the

¹ Blue Book, No. 2, p. 259.

state of ignorance, of baseness, of political ineptitude, to which I have reduced my subject populations ; and then deny, if you can, my fitness to reign over them for ever.' The inversion of logic as well as morality in this style of reasoning is no bar to its being considered conclusive by the partisans of Turkey in this country. They are the slaves of a foregone conclusion, and no argument comes amiss to them, however intrinsically absurd, which wears the livery of their pet idea.

But the facts are very different from the representation of them given by the Turkish Government. If the Bulgarians were in the condition described by their oppressors, it would be no proof at all of their political incapacity when the cause of their misfortunes was removed. But the truth is that they have shown not only a marvellous vitality, but also an unusual proficiency in all the qualities which constitute fitness for self-government. Their industry is proverbial, and I have produced evidence enough of it already to make it unnecessary to dwell upon it here. Their aptitude for commerce is equally remarkable, and there are very few commercial centres in Europe in which their houses of business have no connections. The markets of the East are largely supplied with attar of roses from Bulgaria, and woollen stuffs manufactured by Bulgarian women are almost in as great request as their attar of roses.

In the matter of education they are equally zealous and persevering. There is scarcely a village without its school, supplemented in many cases by a reading-room, in which the adults meet of an evening to discuss their local affairs, and to enjoy such scanty literature as they may chance to possess. These village schools are entirely supported by voluntary rates ; and though the

education given in them is not of a high order, the result is that the percentage of Bulgarians who can read and write is far higher than the percentage of people in England who could have done so forty years ago. In nearly all their towns they have now got gymnasia which are, for the most part, self-supporting. Here, too, there is doubtless room for improvement in the quality of the instruction given. And the Bulgarians themselves are so conscious of this that those of them, who can scrape a sufficient sum of money together for the purpose, often send their sons to be educated in Germany and France, in Russia, Switzerland, Croatia, Bucharest, and Belgrade. The expense of this education is sometimes borne by the commune of the town or village, and sometimes by one or more of the more prosperous of the inhabitants, who gladly deprive themselves of little luxuries for the sake of contributing, as far as in them lies, to the elevation of their country. And in this pursuit of knowledge the Bulgarians have had to encounter such difficulties and discouragements as would damp the ardour and paralyze the energies of a people less virtuous and tenacious than themselves. Last June a raid was made by Bashi-Bazouks on some of the teachers, who were hurried off to prison and otherwise ill-used; their offence consisting in the possession of some chemical apparatus which they used for illustrating their lessons on physical science, and which the ignorant Bashi-Bazouks mistook for infernal machines intended for purposes of warfare. But this, after all, was excusable in comparison with the freak of a successor of Midhat Pasha in the Governor-Generalship of the Vilayet of the Danube. This worthy functionary put the 'Iliad' of Homer on the Turkish Index, and prohibited the in-

troduction of any copies of it into Bulgaria, for fear it might stimulate the Bulgarians to rebellion !

Incidents like these, however, belong rather to the class of petty annoyances than of brutal oppression, and illustrate the gross ignorance of the Turkish authorities rather than a deliberate hostility to education. Even so, they prove that the Bulgarians are far more fit to govern the Turks than the latter are to govern them. But the Turks do not stop at the point of a stupid obscurantism. They systematically oppose the spread of education. During the much vaunted Governor-Generalship of Midhat Pasha multitudes of Bulgarian schoolmasters were exiled, imprisoned, or hanged ; and the first objects of attack, in the Turkish carnival of horrors in Bulgaria last summer, were the school teachers, male and female, and the schoolhouses.

This, I admit, is natural enough. The Turks are cunning enough to know that their only hope lies in keeping the subject population ignorant and disarmed. Increased knowledge means increased desire for emancipation from a foul and cruel slavery, and the spread of education therefore implies the spread of disaffection. Midhat, being far above the average of Turkish intelligence, appreciated the danger more readily than the average Turk, and set to work accordingly. The hanging of an occasional schoolmaster for the crime of writing a letter or article in the newspapers, pointing out some abuse in the administration, was not sufficiently impressive to strike terror into the Bulgarian imagination, and turn it aside from the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge. And so the Bulgarian atrocities were planned in Midhat's brain, and executed by Midhat's agents. All this is quite consistent with much improvement in the material administration of Bulgaria while

Midhat Pasha was Governor-General. He is probably a patriotic man from his own point of view. He is enlightened enough to see that Turkey is full of the raw material of unbounded wealth, and if he could only reconcile the development of her enormous resources with the continuance of Ottoman domination, he would no doubt be well satisfied. He was willing enough therefore to encourage facilities for improving the material condition of Bulgaria, for the more Bulgaria prospered, the larger would be the contributions which would flow into the treasury of the Porte and into the pockets of Midhat himself. But, in order to make this policy safe, all dreams of freedom, all hope of emancipation from Turkish rule, must be sternly quenched.

The communal system of Bulgaria has been described in a previous chapter, and I need not do more here than recall its leading features. Every town and village in Bulgaria have each their council (*Obschtina*), freely elected by the inhabitants, and generally consisting of the worthiest members of the community. This council manages the affairs of the commune generally. It has under its management the churches and schools, and whatever property the people may possess in common, such as communal land, hospital endowments, and the like.

This communal organization is entirely voluntary. It is tolerated by the Turkish Government, but is quite independent of it, and has no legal status whatever. Outside of it are two other administrative systems—the civil administration of the Porte and the ecclesiastical administration of the chief of the Bulgarian Church, who has the title of Exarch. The Porte, as I have already explained, has had the craft to make the

ecclesiastical organizations of the different religious communities into departments of the general governmental bureaucracy. The chiefs have their own courts and can enforce their decrees through Turkish officials. It is incumbent on them to be resident in Constantinople, so as to be directly under the eye and influence of the Sultan and Grand Vizier, who hold them as hostages for their flocks. The latter are thus between two fires—the Pasha of the district, with his rapacious underlings; and the ecclesiastical chief, with his staff of inferior dignitaries. The communal council is the intermediary in both cases. It is through it that all business is transacted, and the members of the council are held responsible for the whole body. The office is thus a sufficiently onerous one, and by no means free from danger. For if the representative of the Government, from the Zaptieh up to the Pasha, should chance to think himself aggrieved, the headman of the commune is the most likely person to be made the victim of the Turk's anger or caprice. The special correspondent of the *Times* the other day, in one of his interesting communications from Pera,¹ related a shocking story which illustrates the insolence of the governing caste and the degradation to which even the leading men among the Bulgarians are obliged to submit. On last Christmas Day a Zaptieh arrived in the village of Brankortsi. He wished to take up his abode in the house of one of the villagers who had two young and pretty daughters on whom the Zaptieh had cast his eyes. On intimating his wishes to the headman of the village, the latter said that two Albanians were already lodged in the house, and there was no accommodation to spare; but he offered to provide lodgings for the

¹ *Times* of February 7, 1877.

Zaptieh elsewhere. This was too much for the Zaptieh's temper. What ! he, a Turkish official, denied admittance into any house which he chose to mark for his own. The offence was not to be borne, especially when the house in question contained two pretty Christian maidens. So the worthy Bulgarian was beaten unmercifully. But the vengeance of this guardian of person and property was not yet satiated. He stabled his horse, took the saddle and bridle, and put them on the headman of the village, dressed in his Christmas attire preparatory to attending Divine Service. The Zaptieh then mounted him, and rode him up and down the village, taking care to drive him, in his holiday dress, through all 'the puddles where the mud was deepest.'

Arrived at last at the house which the headman had appointed for the reception of the Zaptieh, the latter 'pulled up, alighted, and was soon surrounded by the villagers, all aghast at the sight of the strange equestrian group, *yet never daring to interfere or remonstrate*. The Zaptieh bade the landlord bring out an armful of hay, and as the man ventured to intercede for the poor *Cmet* [headman], the Zaptieh struck him in the face with so heavy a blow as to stretch him almost senseless on the ground. The "man-horse" was brought up, tied by his rider to a post outside the door, and, whip in hand, bidden to eat the hay. The poor man, now thoroughly unmanned, and bathing that forage with his tears, tried to comply with the brutal order, and took some of the hay between his teeth. . . . The *Cmet*, a person of importance in the village, and to whom the Government entrusts the collection of taxes to the average yearly amount of 200,000 piastres, would never dare to lodge complaint of this

ill-treatment, as nothing would save him from the policeman's vengeance, or from that of the body to which he belongs.'

And it is towards a Government, of whose rule this is an ordinary sample, that Lord Derby feels so tenderly that he could not endure that the English Plenipotentiary at the Conference should allow his sense of justice and hatred of oppression to betray him into the use of language, which the Turkish Government could by possibility understand as implying a menace.

Surely it requires the stamina of a very noble race to bear up against this cruel oppression, and to make the progress in knowledge which the Bulgarians have made, not merely without help or encouragement from the Government, but against a combination of obstacles before which a less hardy and tenacious people would have recoiled in dismay. The Turks in Bulgaria, with every advantage on their side, are far behind the Bulgarians in civilization. They have no system of local self-government, but are simply part of the general Turkish administration.

But what about the Pomaks or Slave Mussulmans of Bulgaria. There are nearly half a million of them, and they are the principal landowners. How would they like a scheme of reform which would so far agree with Mr. Gladstone's policy as to substitute a Christian administration, practically independent of the Porte, for the present system? We have been assured by the Turkish Government that the Pomaks would seriously resent such infringement on the 'independence' of the Porte, and might possibly even assail the escort of the proposed Commission. Lord Salisbury, fortunately, does not seem to be imbued with that implicit con-

fidence in Turkish veracity with which Sir Henry Elliot appears to be so deeply penetrated. At all events, Lord Salisbury preferred to get at the facts through his own agents rather than through the agents of the Turkish Government. He instructed one of his secretaries, therefore, to put himself in communication with Consul Calvert and Captain Ardagh, and ascertain through them the real feelings of the Slave Mussulmans of Bulgaria. The result of those inquiries is recorded in Blue Book No. 2, pp. 170-3, and it is in flat contradiction to the allegations of the Turkish Government. Consul Calvert writes from Philippopoli on the 17th of last December :—

‘I have now seen all the local “Beys” or Turkish¹ land-owners. They every one comment strongly on the wretched state to which the population at large has been reduced through Ottoman mis-government, and which has caused the discontent that has brought the country to its present pass. One Bey, without any leading on my part, volunteered confidentially his opinion on this subject as follows :—“The best remedy,” he said, “for these evils would be for the Foreign Powers to assist on the association of an experienced European in the administration of the province, with power to control all abuses.” He made this remark as an original idea of his own, and apparently in ignorance that anything of the sort had been projected by the Western Powers. . . . On my inquiring whether the Mussulman population would not view with jealousy reforms carried out under foreign auspices, he energetically exclaimed, “Every man of us would bless the Powers if they would under-

¹ ‘Turkish’ is here used as a generic term for Mussulman. The Beys of Bulgaria are Slaves.

take so good a work." I sounded the other Beys by asking in a casual manner: "Supposing now the friendly Powers were to put a pressure on the Porte with regard to administrative reforms, how would it be viewed by you Mussulmans?" They one and all energetically replied with the same formula. One Bey even laughed outright at my simplicity in putting such a question. Another remarked, "Our religion teaches us to appreciate good, from whatever quarter it may come. It is enough that it is good. Moreover, Islam enjoins gratitude to those who do one good, and should the Powers give us prosperity and quiet, we would all of us put up prayers for them." "There is among Orientals," adds Consul Calvert, "a much greater uniformity of character and ideas than is the case with Europeans, and there is no reason to doubt that sentiments similar to those expressed by the Turkish notables of Philippopoli would be found to prevail throughout at least European Turkey. Assuming, however, that it was otherwise, I would submit as the general result of my experience that the power of the Central Government over the Mussulman population is, in all civil matters, absolute and unlimited. . . . I have never perceived the faintest sign of a disposition to dispute or question the authority of the Central Government in any way; and I believe any Consul in Turkey would be ready to confirm the statement, that there cannot be a more hollow plea than that which the Porte often finds it convenient to put forward of its inability to control the Moslem population.'

In this opinion the Mussulman Beys of Bulgaria are at one with Consul Calvert. 'The Bulgarian notables,' he says, 'whom I have questioned here, agree in laying all the blame of the late excesses in these parts on Akif

Pasha, *whom they believe to have acted with the approval, if not at the instigation, of the Central Government*; for the Turkish population is, as they remark, eminently submissive, and, as a rule, quiet and inoffensive. They add, that when the Government asserted its will and authority by the execution of Bashi-Bazouks, the evilly disposed Moslems of this place were at once completely cowed. In a word, nothing can be more complete than the system of centralisation which has been established throughout the Empire. It is a well-recognised fact which is expressed by the popular saying, that “the fish rots from the head.”’

Consul Calvert, indeed, admits one exception to this general statement—an exception on which I have insisted in the preceding pages. ‘Not even the Government,’ he says, ‘is strong enough to touch the Cheri or Religious Law, under which Christian evidence is inadmissible.’

Captain Ardagh’s report is substantially the same. He asked the Beys ‘their views as regards the superintendence of reforms,’ and ‘all but one considered that the appointment of foreign Commissioners, appointed by the Guaranteeing Powers, would be acceptable; and several expressed a strong opinion that the presence of such officials in the general and local administration would be an unmixed benefit. . . . With the exception of the one I have mentioned, all the other Turkish gentlemen agreed in saying that whatever other measures were proposed by the Conference, and agreed to by the Porte, if promulgated *bonâ fide*, would be received without opposition by the Mussulman population, provided only that religion was not interfered with.’

The reason why the single dissentient among the

Beys thought the Mussulman population would resist a foreign Commission appointed by the Great Powers is remarkable. 'This opinion,' says Captain Ardagh, 'is rather to be interpreted that the Porte and the official classes, in the event of the Conference extorting an involuntary consent to measures to which they are at heart opposed, would create an antagonistic feeling among the lower classes, in order to throw difficulties in the way of rendering such measures practically operative, and would foment, or at least be at little pains to repress, any disturbances which might arise from the hostile feeling which they had evoked.' 'Without such provocation,' Captain Ardagh himself thinks, 'there is strong reason to believe that the lower part of the urban and rural population, partly from ignorance, partly from habitual submissiveness, would accept without a murmur any changes likely to be proposed.' He is 'therefore of opinion that there is little or no probability of any outbreak on the part of the Mahometan population of internal origin, and that disturbances are only to be apprehended from the action of exterior influences, namely, of the Central Government.'

The Beys also 'expressed a very great anxiety for the establishment of schools in which the youth of all creeds might in common receive a good education; and attributed the decadence of the Turks, as compared with the progress made by Bulgarians, Greeks, Armenians, &c., in great measure to the almost total want of means of education. They also considered that disaffection was fostered by the neglect of the Porte to provide capable teachers, thereby compelling the non-Mussulman population to resort to external nationalities for persons to instruct their schools.'

One of the Beys, it is right to add, told Consul Calvert that there were two things only which the Mussulman population would resist, 'not only with arms, but with their very nails;' namely, 'the transfer of the province to Russia, or, which was the same thing, a Russian occupation;' and 'the putting the Bulgarians over their heads.'

The case, then, as regards Bulgaria—and Bulgaria, let it be remembered, was by far the most important factor in the deliberations of the Conference at Constantinople—appears to me to be a very simple one. You have a population of some five million Christians, equal to any population in Europe in capacity for self-government and civilization. Mixed up with them is nearly half a million of Mussulmans, of the same race and inheriting the same historical traditions, though possessing a hostile faith. Scattered amongst these is a small and unimportant minority of Turks proper, chiefly connected in various ways with the official class. To these must be added the recently imported Circassians; lawless and turbulent Asiatics, who disdain honest industry, and live mainly on the depredations which they habitually practise on the native population. I may say, in passing, that the plea of necessity and generosity offered by the Turkish Government for planting these wild freebooters among the peaceful Bulgarians is a hollow pretence. The Porte possesses trackless wastes of fertile land in Asia, where the Circassians might have easily settled, and would have preferred to settle if they had been allowed the choice. But the governing Pashas thought it would be useful to have a few myriads of cutthroats settled among the Bulgarians, in order to terrorise them generally, and be ready for massacre in any emergency that might

seem to require that readiest weapon, in the administrative machinery of Turkey, for upholding her iniquitous rule.

Suppose now that were to happen to-morrow which Lord Salisbury deprecated in his speech in the House of Lords last night (Feb. 20); namely, the sudden collapse, under European coercion, of the Government of the Porte. 'We should have destroyed,' he said, 'the only Government which now keeps some thirty millions of people in some kind of order.' But is that a quite accurate account of the true state of the case? Consider the evidence just quoted—the latest which the inquiries of our Government have furnished from Bulgaria; and remember that Consul Calvert, who knows Asiatic Turkey well, believes that what is true of Bulgaria is true of the Turkish Empire generally, both in Europe and Turkey. What do the Mussulman gentry of Bulgaria tell us? They ascribe all the ills of Bulgaria to the Central Government. 'The wretched state to which the population at large has been reduced' they attribute to 'Ottoman misgovernment,' operating in unjust and oppressive taxation; in the discouragement of education, which keeps the Mussulmans in ignorance, and forces the Bulgarian Christians to resort to foreign teachers, and thereby breeds disaffection; to disorders directly encouraged or instigated by the Government at Constantinople. Not a word about Russian intrigues or secret societies. 'The fish rots from the head.' The Mussulman population of the provinces are submissive and quiet when they are not roused to fanaticism by the agents of the Government. The whole evil, including the Bulgarian atrocities, is traced to the fountain-head. The Porte is the fountain

of corruption, the fomentor of disorder, the inveterate disturber of the general peace.

Such is the testimony of the Beys of Bulgaria ; and we have Consul Calvert's word for it—confirmed by a plethora of other evidence which I have already laid before the reader—that the case of Bulgaria is the case of the whole of Turkey. In spite, then, of all my respect for Lord Salisbury's great abilities and sterling honesty of purpose, I must humbly express my conviction that the sudden disappearance of the Ottoman Government would not be the destruction of 'the only Government which now keeps some thirty millions of people in some kind of order,' but, on the contrary, the destruction of a horde of bandits who luxuriate in sumptuous palaces on the Bosphorus on the spoils which they levy, by every species of iniquity and cruelty, on the thirty millions of human beings whom it is their interest to keep in a state of intestine strife. It is not order that the two hundred Pashas keep, but chronic disorder, throughout the length and breadth of their calamitous sway ; and the destruction of their power could not be other than a blessing to the various races on whose agony they flourish. Here and there, in Asia rather than Europe, there would be conflicts and bloodshed. And what have we now but conflicts and bloodshed, continuous and unceasing, and varied occasionally by a grand performance which arrests the attention and shocks the conscience of civilized mankind ? Remove the mischief-makers and stand aside, and Turkey in Europe at least will soon reconstitute itself anew on some basis which will be infinitely preferable to the rule of the Turk. This would certainly be the case in Bulgaria. Let the whole paraphernalia of Turkish officialism be got rid of,

‘bag and baggage,’ and the Bulgarians, Slave and Mussulman, would soon discover a *modus vivendi*, and learn to live and let live. The Bulgarian Beys told Captain Ardagh ‘that prohibiting the carrying of arms was quite practicable, and would excite no ill-feeling.’ The Circassians, too, when they found themselves deprived of Turkish support, would probably settle down into peaceful neighbours, turning their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks.

I contend, therefore, that even ‘the burning down of Stamboul,’ and the destruction outright of the Turkish Government, would be far better than an indefinite continuance of the present state of things. But I cannot admit that the Governments of Europe were driven to the adoption of such heroic remedies. If any two of them, let alone all, had given the Porte distinctly to understand that they meant to enforce their demands, at the point of the sword if need be, the Turks would have made a merit of necessity and bowed to the decrees of fate. They always do under such circumstances. They intrigued and blustered when France and England, in 1860, resolved to settle the disturbances in Syria. Fuad Pasha threatened a renewal of massacres, and conjured up a terrible picture of the dangers that would certainly ensue on any interference with the independence of Turkey. But France and England, acting in concert with the other Powers, made up their minds to intervene, and, having got the other Powers to agree, they answered the threats of Fuad Pasha by doubling their armaments. They occupied Syria, they hanged a Pasha, they gave autonomy to the Lebanon, and taught Turkey a lesson out of which Lord Derby might profitably borrow a

leaf on the present occasion. There were croakers then, as there are now, who declaimed on the theme of Turkish independence, and prophesied that England was being led into a trap fraught with peril to British interests. France, having once got a military footing in Syria, would find some plausible excuse for staying there; and then, taking advantage of the first European complication, she would seize upon Egypt, and thus place our Indian Empire in jeopardy.

Such were the gloomy forebodings with which some of our political mentors endeavoured to dissuade the Government of Lord Palmerston from trenching on Turkish independence in the affairs of Syria; and that veteran statesman himself showed this distrust of France, though he refused to give way to it.¹ The Turks yielded, without shedding a drop of their own or of other people's blood, and the Lebanon has enjoyed peace and prosperity ever since. Would it not have been worth while, is it even now too late, to try in 1877 the policy which was found so successful in 1860? It is very significant that the Bulgarian Beys, on the eve of the Conference, assumed as a matter of course that coercion would be necessary to induce the Porte to accept the reforms offered by the Plenipotentiaries of the Western Powers. 'The best remedy,' one of them suggested, was that the Great Powers should 'insist' on the appointment 'of an experienced European,' 'with power to reform all abuses.' But, instead of 'insisting' on the acceptance of his own Plenipotentiary's attenuated proposals, Lord Derby intimated to the Government of the Porte, even before the Conference met, that it might safely reject whatever scheme was presented to it, without giving serious offence to her

¹ Life, by the Hon. Evelyn Ashley, vol. ii. p. 212.

Majesty's Government by such conduct.¹ After this, I am not surprised to find Lord Salisbury telegraphing to Lord Derby on January 8 that the Grand Vizier believed he could 'count upon the assistance of Lord Derby and Lord Beaconsfield.'²

The original programme of the Conference was, perhaps, the best temporary scheme that could have been devised under the circumstances. But it could not be more than temporary. The Ottoman Power is doomed, and the knell of its approaching dissolution is near at hand, even if Russia should stay her half-uplifted arm for a season. Surely, then, it is the part of prudent statesmanship to provide for the morrow, instead of living from hand to mouth with an impotent policy of blank negotiations. When the catastrophe takes place—and it may take place any day—what is to happen next? That 'distribution of power,' which Lord Beaconsfield thinks may be postponed to the Greek Kalends by diplomatic manœuvring, is, in fact, imminent, thanks chiefly to his own management of the question. On what lines shall the distribution be made? Lord Beaconsfield dismisses summarily off the stage of discussion the proposal to form gradually a chain of autonomous States till in process of time nothing is left to the Turks but 'Constantinople and a cabbage garden.' But, after all, would not that be the kindest policy towards the Turks themselves? The tribute which the autonomous States would pay would

¹ Blue Book, No. 2, p. 182. This intimation was made on December 19 to Musurus Pasha, who thought it so important that he telegraphed it at once to his Government, and had the gratification, two days afterwards, of conveying the thanks of the Porte to Lord Derby. The first meeting of the Conference was on December 21.

² *Ibid.* p. 183.

yield a larger revenue than the fraction of the taxes and extortions which now finds its way into the public treasury of the Porte. Turkey, moreover, would thus be able to sell her navy and probably disband her army, for she would be under the protection of the Great Powers much more effectually than she possibly can be while she maintains her nominal independence. And then, when the hour of doom at length arrived, she would be able to pass through the portals of a quiet euthanasia, instead of a painful convulsion, out of a world to which she has been an unmitigated curse from the first day of her appearance on the page of history.

The scheme of reforms proposed by the Conference would unquestionably have passed by a gradual transition from the administrative to the political autonomy of the territories lying within the sphere of its operation; and, let the advocates of Ottoman domination dream as they list, that is the goal towards which events are marching with no uncertain tread. Let us consider, then, for a moment what elements exist for the gradual formation of a chain of autonomous States in European Turkey.

For Bulgaria there are two possibilities: a foreign prince or union with Roumania or Servia. For the present, the first solution would probably be the most feasible, and it would certainly be the most acceptable to the Bulgarians. An enlightened ruler would in a few years make Bulgaria one of the richest and happiest Principalities in the world. Mussulmans and Christians would equally welcome him with open arms, provided he came with the *imprimatur* of collective Europe, or at least from some State which excites no suspicions or jealousies in Bulgaria. Such a ruler

appears to me to be ready to the hands of the Great Powers in the person of Prince Amadeo of Italy. His too short reign in Spain put his qualities to the test, and proved him to be brave, liberal, and enlightened; a ruler singularly fitted in every way to win the confidence of the Mussulmans and Christians of Bulgaria. Nor would there be any difficulty in the fact of his being a Catholic. It would rather be a recommendation; for it would be a guarantee both to the Mussulmans and to the small minority of Roman Catholics that their religious rights would be scrupulously respected. The orthodox Bulgarians, too, would see in a Roman Catholic ruler a security against subjection to the corrupt and rapacious supremacy of the Fanariote Patriarch. To his purely spiritual jurisdiction, divested of all right of interference in their local affairs, they have no objection. The Bulgarian schism is, in fact, very much like the Anglican schism in the reign of Henry VIII. It is an assertion of the independence of the Bulgarian Church within its own domain, both as against the spiritual and temporal intrusion of the Patriarch; to whom, however, the Bulgarians would gladly yield a primacy of rank and jurisdiction in harmony with ancient canons. As generally happens in such cases, the cardinal points in dispute became lost in minor issues as the quarrel proceeded, and an adjustment can hardly be looked for during the prevalence of a system which makes the Patriarch a mere lackey of the Porte, and the obedient servant of the vilest denizen of the Sultan's or Grand Vizier's harem. Italy, I have no doubt, would gladly provide Prince Amadeo with the nucleus of a defensive military force; and he would find in the native municipal institutions of Bulgaria the necessary machinery for carrying on the civil administration

of the country. The only thing which he would have to create would be an army or militia of modest dimensions: all else would require only development and expansion.

Under such a rule the Christians and Mussulmans would soon learn to live peaceably together; and the latter, secure in their possessions and privileges, and relieved of the strife-stirring Ottoman Government, would probably return, in the course of a few generations, to the faith of their forefathers.

That there is no barrier to the co-existence of Christians and Mussulmans under one Government, provided the Government is not Mussulman, is evident from our own rule in India, and not less so from the experience of the Russian Government. The exceeding intolerance of Russia in matters of religion is, I am aware, an article of faith with a number of good people, whose knowledge of Russia is derived from some rattling book of travels by some roving Englishman, who thinks that he has mastered the Alpha and Omega of Russian politics and social life by a scamper over the steppes, and by an occasional gossip with some stray officer bent on mischief, or with some *mudjik* in a language of which the traveller knows such superficial smattering as suffices to carry him to the end of his journey. I have lived for a year in Russia myself; but I prefer to quote the experience and knowledge of more competent writers to my own inquiries and observation. By way of testing Russia's capacity for governing races of divers religions, I will take two provinces as wide apart as Finland and Turkistan.

‘If we compare,’ says Mr. Mackenzie Wallace, ‘a Finnish village in any stage of Russification with a Tartar village, of which the inhabitants are Mahometans,

we cannot fail to be struck by the contrast. In the latter, though there may be many Russians, there is no blending of the two races. Between them religion has raised an impassable barrier. There are many villages in the eastern and north-eastern provinces of European Russia which have been for many generations half Tartar and half Russian, and the amalgamation of the two nationalities has not yet begun. Near the one end stands the Christian church, and near the other stands the little *metchet* or Mahometan house of prayer. The whole village forms one commune, with one village assembly and one village elder; but socially it is composed of two distinct communities, each possessing its peculiar customs and peculiar mode of life. The Tartar may learn the Russian language, but he does not on that account become Russianised. It must not, however, be supposed that the two races are imbued with fanatical hatred towards each other. On the contrary, they live in perfectly good-fellowship, elect as village elder sometimes a Russian and sometimes a Tartar, and discuss the communal affairs in the village assembly without reference to religious matters. I know one village where the good-fellowship went even a step further: the Christians determined to repair their church, and the Mahometans helped them to transport wood for the purpose! All this tends to show that under a tolerably good Government, which does not favour one race at the expense of the other, Mahometans, Tartars, and Christian Slaves can live peaceably together.¹

This is the testimony of a writer who has spent, not six weeks, but six years in studying the institutions

¹ 'Russia,' by D. Mackenzie Wallace, vol. i. pp. 238-9.

of Russia, and her manner of governing her vast and various populations. Mr. Schuyler's opportunities were not inferior to those of Mr. Wallace, nor his experience less varied ; and this is the witness which he bears to the religious toleration of the Russian Government : ' There has not been the slightest hindrance offered by the Russians to the full exercise of Mahometanism, which is professed by many Russian officials, and is one of the State religions, the most of the Mussulman subjects of the Empire being under the control of the *Mufti*, who resides at Ufa, and who, by-the-by, is a Russian nobleman and an accomplished gentleman.'¹

These are illustrations of the ease with which Christians and Mussulmans may be governed in the same community when the supreme Power is not debarred either by religion or disposition from dispensing equal justice.

The case of Bulgaria, then, appears to me easy enough of solution in one or other of the ways I have suggested. But Bosnia presents greater difficulties. The Christians of that province are much more ignorant and far less trained in the art of self-government than those of Bulgaria. This result has followed from more causes than one. In the first place, Bosnia is more inaccessible than Bulgaria. The latter is surrounded by enlightening influences from Russia, Greece, Roumania, and Servia ; and her enterprising children, with all their oppressions, have more facilities than the Bosnians for intercourse with the outer world. The Bulgarian Christians, moreover, are not divided from their Mussulman neighbours by anything like the same antagonism which divides into hostile camps the Mussulman and Christian Bosniacs. Some share of the difference

¹ ' Turkistan,' by Eugene Schuyler, vol. i. p. 162.

must also be traced to the influence of mediæval feudalism. In no country of Europe did the spirit of feudalism reach a higher development, or rather exaggeration, than in Bosnia; and in no country of Europe did it retain its energy so long. It is far from extinct even now; but it flourished in full vigour till the arm of Omar Pasha struck it down in 1851. Alongside of this feudal system there existed in ancient times an organization of village communities with municipal institutions like those which still survive in Bulgaria. The Slaves are an essentially democratic race, and develop even under a despotic government an irrepres- sible instinct for municipal government. The rural peasantry of Russia live under institutions of a far more democratic character than those of England. The English peasant is indeed free to go whithersoever his business or fancy may carry him; but he has little or no share in the soil of the country, and, as a consequence, little or no voice either in public legislation or local government. This comparison is not made controversially, but for the purpose of calling attention to the remarkable aptitude of the Slaves for self-government whenever they find a fair field for its exercise.

The village organizations of Bosnia were abolished together with the feudal privileges of the Beys, or Mussulman nobles, after their subjection by Omar Pasha in 1851; and the country is now governed by the corrupt and corrupting administration of the Turkish Divan, which is held in equal abhorrence by Mussulman and Christian. I have already explained how the Turkish Government, acting on its usual policy of ruling by the art of sowing discord among the different sections of its subjects, first enlisted the Christians of Bosnia against the native Mussulmans by promising to

emancipate them from their feudal thralldom ; and then sought to conciliate and compensate the Beys and Agas for their defeat and lost privileges by delivering to their vengeance the miserable Rayahs, whose timely aid had enabled Omar Pasha to crush the rebellion. So that the Christians, instead of getting rid of one set of tyrants, found themselves saddled with an additional set still more odious ; and their sufferings went on increasing till life itself became so insupportable that they cast it on the hazard of an insurrection, with their eyes full open to the methods by which Turkey is wont to put insurrections down. And Lord Derby, with his eyes, too, full open to those methods, full open also to the intolerable condition of the Bosnian Rayahs, calmly upbraided the Turkish Government for its ' apathy ' in dealing with the insurrection, roused himself into unwonted energy to induce the Austrian Government to starve the refugees from Turkish brutalities back upon the bayonets of their pursuers ; and now, standing in the midst of the peers of England, declares contemptuously that ' there had been nothing more in question than the suppression of a petty local insurrection.'¹ I verily believe that he would have spoken with more feeling if it had been a question of suppressing an outbreak of cattle-plague on the estate of Knowsley. As, however, I happen to be one of those who are still walking on the lower levels of humanity, and know not when I shall attain to that Epicurean altitude which will enable me to look down from such a height on human beings struggling on the plain below, that their quarrels shall appear as petty as their movements

¹ Speech in the House of Lords on Feb. 21, 1877.

seem stationary,¹ I must proceed according to my lights, and return to consider the 'petty local insurrection,' of which Lord Derby failed to see the significance.

The facts which I have stated make the question of autonomy for Bosnia much more complicated than it is for Bulgaria. But the difficulties are by no means insuperable; and what is statesmanship good for if it quails and turns tail before obstacles which are only hard to climb, but not insurmountable? Difficulties, which take time to remove, may often be skilfully turned, and by-and-by be rendered harmless. I believe that this may be done in the case of Bosnia. The cloud which has settled on that beautiful land is not without its silver lining. The feud between Bosnian Mussulman and Bosnian Rayah is not past the skill of the healing art, if only the doctors would dismiss their mutual jealousies and think chiefly of their patient. One important item in the case is the rooted antipathy of the Slave Mussulmans in Bosnia as elsewhere to the hateful and despised Osmanli. Another is the still lingering attraction by which ever and anon the Mussulman Slave finds himself drawn silently and mysteriously towards his Christian kindred. Whenever he has risen to shake off the yoke of the Turk his first impulse has been to stretch out beseeching hands towards his brethren over the Save or Drina, or beyond the valley of the Morava. Very remarkable is it that when the Hungarian revolution broke out in 1848, and the Mussulman Bosniacs once more flew to arms in the cause of freedom, it was not towards the Magyar that their sympathies were drawn, but towards the

¹ Et tamen est quidam locus altis montibus unde
Stare videntur, et in campis consistere fulgur.

Lucret. ii. 331.

Christian Slaves fighting under the banner of the gallant Jelacić, Ban of Croatia. 'By a singular anomaly,' says Ranke, 'instead of making common cause with the Magyar insurgents, they declared themselves friends to Jelacić, and consequently to the Austrian cause, by demanding their incorporation with some great Slave state, no matter what, provided they did not remain subject to the Turks.' What Ranke calls 'a singular anomaly' I should call a true and natural instinct, which enabled the Mussulman Slaves of Bosnia to divine that, whatever the merits of the immediate quarrel might be, the final triumph and ascendancy of the Magyar boded not well, but ill, for freedom. Certainly the policy of the Magyars of late has gone far to justify the choice of the Mussulman Bosniacs in 1849.

A great man who has possessed rare opportunities, which he has diligently used, for mastering all the intricacies of at least that portion of the Eastern Question which concerns Bosnia—I mean Bishop Strossmayer—thinks that the best solution of the problem would be found in the administrative union of Bosnia and Servia. Coming from such an authority, the suggestion is at least worthy of careful consideration. Strossmayer has been Bishop of Bosnia for six-and-twenty years. He discharges at the same time the office of Vicar-Apostolic towards the few Roman Catholics in Servia. His knowledge of both countries is thus both thorough and minute, and his well-weighed opinion must therefore carry weight with all reasonable minds. Now Bishop Strossmayer sees no difficulties of any moment between the union of Bosnia and Servia. He makes light of the fanaticism of the Mussulman Bosniacs. He has often been an honoured guest in their houses,

and they, on their part, listen with delight to the Slave sermons of the most eloquent prelate in Europe. Many of them have been on friendly terms with the Christian clergy, and not unfrequently consult them on religious matters, and even avail themselves sometimes of their official ministrations. There is nothing in them of that stupid unreasoning bigotry which is so marked a feature in the character of the ordinary Turk. Their fanaticism, as I have elsewhere explained, has more of a political than of a religious basis. Let them once be persuaded that union with Servia would involve no jeopardy to any rights or privileges which they now enjoy, and they would welcome the arrangement with more than acquiescence. The wounds, too, and sores which the present insurrection has inflicted would soon be forgotten in the joy of riddance of the Turk, the dire and detested enemy alike of Mussulman and Christian Bosniac. For the Bosnian Mussulman, though capable of being roused to fanaticism, is neither cruel nor implacable. He is, according to Strossmayer's account of him, a very fine fellow on the whole, provided he keeps at a safe distance from that fountain of all iniquity and corruption—the Osmanli officialism of Stamboul. Let him but breathe the mephitic air of that, and it is all over with him. He becomes, on the principle of *corruptio optimi, pessima*—more Turkish than a Turk. Bishop Strossmayer related to Dr. Liddon and myself an instance of such a moral ruin in the case of a young Bosnian Mussulman, of promising character, who entered the Civil Service of the Porte, and returning from Constantinople during the recent insurrection, distinguished himself by the ferocity of his conduct towards the insurgents.

The chief difficulty, I apprehend, would be an agra-

rian one. The Rayahs have been ousted from most of their land by the Turks and Mussulman Bosniacs, and any settlement of the question would be incomplete and unstable which left that point in abeyance. Yet here, again, I believe the difficulty would be found less than it seems, if only it were fairly and firmly grappled. So much good land is allowed to lie waste, or is cultivated so badly, that under a proper system any peasant might have his plot of ground, while at the same time the incomes of the Mussulman Beys and Agas might easily be quadrupled. Some Commission, however, of the kind proposed by the Constantinople Conference would probably be necessary to give confidence to both parties, and to see the experiment fairly started and in working order.

The religious question would present no difficulty at all. There might be some opposition and bickerings on the part of the Franciscan monks, who chiefly manage the spiritual administration of the Roman Catholics of Bosnia; but the mass of the Roman Catholics would rejoice in the change. Such, at least, is the opinion of Bishop Strossmayer, and I know not where a better or more unprejudiced opinion could be got. His prejudices ought naturally to lead him to an opposite conclusion; for he is a Roman Catholic, while Servia is almost exclusively Orthodox. But Servia is at the same time, as Strossmayer emphatically asserted, 'one of the most tolerant governments in Europe.' 'I have never asked the Servian Government,' he added, 'to do anything for my people which they did not do willingly and with alacrity.' The Servian Government, in fact, not only grants full and unfettered toleration to all religions, but pays their ministers, Moslems not excepted. During the late war with Turkey

the muezzin called the hours of prayer as usual from the minaret of a Turkish mosque in the heart of Belgrade ; and the Jews, as I can personally testify, spoke with the greatest cordiality and goodwill of the people and Government of Servia. They are not allowed at present—I hope the prohibition will be only temporary—to settle in the interior of the country ; but this is for reasons altogether apart from religious considerations. This being the real state of the case, it is not a little amusing to see the Turkish Government—itsself an incarnation of religious intolerance—posing before Europe in the attitude of a champion of religious liberty, and ostentatiously demanding of Servia, as one of the conditions of peace, security for religious toleration to Jews and Catholics—the latter of whom at least enjoy more practical toleration than their co-religionists enjoy in England.

But if Bishop Strossmayer's plan of pacification should not happen to win approval, by all means let another be substituted for it : say, either the erection of Bosnia by itself into an autonomous State, or its union with Austria. The last seems to me the least desirable of all ; but it would be a vast improvement on the present state of things.

Of the Herzegovina it is not necessary to say much. Strossmayer would recommend its union with Montenegro, and the choice would lie between that and Bosnia. Certainly, the gallant and heroic defence which Montenegro has made for centuries against all the attempts of the Turks to subdue it, has established a claim for recognition and compensation in any distribution of territory which the course of events may render necessary.

So far I have been dealing only with that part

of the Eastern Question which lay within the purview of the Plenipotentiaries at Constantinople. But of course the provinces of European Turkey lying outside the confines of the recent, or rather the present, disturbances cannot be left out of the reckoning. They, too, must be gradually detached from the rule of the Ottoman as opportunity offers. But our immediate concern is with the theatre of the recent atrocities; and the choice now lies between the coercion of Turkey by the sword of Russia, or by the stern and determined mandate of two or more of the Great Powers. Turkey has not defied the united will of Europe, for the united will of Europe has never spoken to her. Lord Derby, from the first, put his veto on the presentation to the Porte of anything embodying the united judgment of the Powers, and took pains to let it be known that the departure of the British Ambassador did not indicate, like that of his colleagues, the displeasure of his Government. It was with astonishment that I read Sir Henry Elliot's speech on the eve of taking his leave of absence—a speech which the Turks might be excused for reading as an expression of congratulation to the Porte for having refused a scheme of reforms of which Sir Henry himself had expressed his strong disapprobation. But I ceased to be surprised on reading the Blue Book; for it is now evident that the hearts of the Premier and of his Foreign Secretary were never seriously engaged in the matter. They forearmed Turkey against the proposals of the Conference by forewarning her that she had nothing to fear from England in the event of refusal; and now they are straining every means to paralyze the action of the only Power from which Turkey has anything to fear. They began their diplomatic campaign as hot partisans of

Turkey, and hot partisans of Turkey they still remain. Their object—they make no secret of it—is to bolster up Turkey, not to improve the lot of her Christian subjects, except in so far as the improvement of their lot might help to accomplish the main purpose of their policy. ‘What was the position of my noble friend at Constantinople?’ asked Lord Beaconsfield the other evening in the House of Lords. And answering his own question, he triumphantly explained, ‘Why, he was there as a mediator’¹—that is, in other words, to shield Turkey from coercion, the only argument which Turkey understands. I hardly think that is the view which England took of Lord Salisbury’s mission, and his own conduct at the Conference seems to belie the idea. If he had been loyally backed by those who sent him, I have no doubt that his energetic co-operation with the Russian Ambassador would have brought the Turks to reason.

But co-operation with Russia is denounced by the friends of Turkey as treason to England. It is worth while, therefore, to analyse the elements which compose this superstitious terror of Russia ; but the subject must be dealt with in another chapter.

¹ Lord Beaconsfield’s Speech in the House of Lords, February 20, 1877.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RUSSIAN BUGBEAR.

It may seem presumptuous to characterise as 'superstitious' a sentiment which dominates the minds of so many able men. But that mental capacity affords no protection against an unreasoning prejudice is a fact so well attested in the annals of British statesmanship as to dispense me from the necessity of any argument in self-defence, save only a few historical illustrations.

So rapid has been the progress made by this country during the last half-century that it is hard to realise that so late as that date the legal estimate of human life was only 40s. And when merciful juries refused to convict, and the severity of the law was thus found to defeat itself, what remedy did the wisdom of Parliament propose and carry? Did it abolish capital punishment for theft altogether? By no means. No member of the Legislature was as yet bold enough to suggest so great an innovation. The British Parliament screwed up its courage so far as to raise the value of human life from 40s. to 5*l*. Nevertheless juries refused to be conciliated by this rise in the price of the article. In the year 1831 one jury tested the effect of returning a verdict according to the evidence by convicting a prisoner, whom, at the same time, they recommended to

mercy. The victim of their experiment was hanged in spite of their recommendation ; and other juries, being warned by the example, persisted in finding prisoners ' guilty of stealing to the value of 4*l.* 19*s.*,' thus frustrating the ferocity of the law by what was called ' perjured verdicts.' ' I hold in my hands,' said Lord Suffield in the House of Lords, in the autumn of 1833, ' a list of 555 perjured verdicts delivered at the Old Bailey, in fifteen years, for the single offence of stealing from dwelling-houses ; the value stolen being, in these cases, sworn above 40*s.*, but the verdicts returned being to the value of 39*s.* only.'

When Sir Samuel Romilly began his noble campaign against those atrocious laws, he was denounced in even more violent terms than those to which Mr. Gladstone has lately been exposed. In 1810 he introduced and with difficulty passed through the House of Commons a bill to repeal the statute of William which made a theft in a shop, to the amount of five shillings, punishable with death. But the bill was defeated in the House of Lords by a majority of three to one, the majority including an Archbishop and six Bishops, and every lawyer in the House. Some of the speeches delivered on that occasion by noble and learned Lords, of great eminence, are made ludicrous by the contrast between prophecy and fulfilment. ' I trust,' said Lord Ellenborough, then Chief Justice of England, ' that your Lordships will pause before you assent to a measure pregnant with danger to the security of property. The learned judges are *unanimously* agreed that the expediency of justice and the public security require there should not be a remission of capital punishment in this part of the criminal law. My Lords, if we suffer this bill to pass, we shall not know where to stand ; we shall not know

whether we are on our heads or on our feet. My Lords, I think this, above all others, is a law on which so much of the security of mankind depends in its execution, that I should deem myself neglectful of my duty to the public if I failed to let the law take its course.' Lord Wynford, a distinguished Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, declared that if the law were repealed, 'the people of England could not sleep in safety in their beds.' Again and again, year after year, did Sir Samuel Romilly carry his bill through the House of Commons, but only to suffer defeat in the House of Lords by overwhelming majorities, led by the most distinguished members of that august assembly.

Now let the reader just reflect that about half a century ago the whole of the judicial bench of England, and the most learned and able members of the House of Lords, resisted the abolition of a law which made theft to the amount of five shillings punishable with death, and this on the ground that life and property would be rendered so insecure that the people of England 'would not know whether they were on their heads or on their feet;' and then let him say whether intellectual talent and moral integrity are a necessary protection against grotesque delusions. The juries all over England, who refused to put such an atrocious law in force, deficient as they may have been in learning and mental power as compared with the galaxy of brilliant intellects to whom they were opposed, had nevertheless all the foresight and all the statesmanship on their side.

In the same way I believe that all the statesmanship is at this moment on the side of those who laugh at the stupid and irrational craze about Russia, and advocate cordial co-operation with that Power as the best

guarantee for the safety of British interests not less than for the equitable settlement of the Eastern Question. Is England to be for ever the victim of these paralyzing and undignified panics? It is but a very few years since France occupied in the minds of able men, like Lord Palmerston, the place which Russia now occupies in the minds of those who admire the foreign policy of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Derby. We all remember the implacable opposition of Lord Palmerston to the Suez Canal on the ground of 'British interests.' His hostility blinded him even to the commercial advantages of the undertaking. 'Even on this ground,' he said in 1831, 'there is something to be said against the scheme, because it was demonstrated by a Dutch engineer that, owing to difficulties of navigating the Red Sea, in consequence of coral reefs, prevailing winds, and intense heat, the navigation round the Cape would, except with regard to very powerful steamers, be cheaper and shorter than through the Canal.'

Not less blind was he to the feasibility of the enterprise. He succeeded in actually persuading himself that the scheme would never succeed as a private speculation, and that consequently the whole thing was, at bottom, a profound piece of Machiavellian craft on the part of the Emperor of the French, having for its object the occupation of Egypt and the interruption of our communication with India. The passage is so instructive, in the light of recent events, that it deserves to be quoted:—

'I understand that there is scarcely one among the French engineers employed who would not, if he told the truth, acknowledge that the ship canal could not be made without an amount of money and a period of time far exceeding all the calculations hitherto made,

and that, if accomplished, it never could be made to pay interest on the cost incurred. It may safely be said, therefore, that, as a commercial undertaking, it is a bubble scheme, which has been taken up on political grounds, and in antagonism to English interests and English policy.

‘ Well, then, we come to the last point, namely, the political objects of the enterprise ; and these are hostility to England in every possible modification of the scheme. It requires only a glance at the map of the world to see how great would be the moral and military advantage to France in a war with England to have such a short cut to the Indian seas, while we should be obliged to send ships and troops round the Cape. Thouvenel proposes, indeed, that the passage of ships-of-war should be forbidden as at the Dardanelles ; but I presume he does not expect us to receive such a proposal except with a decently suppressed smile. Of course, the first week of a war between France and England would see 15,000 or 20,000 Frenchmen in possession of the Canal, to keep it open for them and shut for us. But then, moreover, so strong a military barrier between Syria and Egypt would greatly add to the means of the Pasha for the time being to declare himself independent of Turkey, which would mean his being a dependent of France ; and lastly, if the Canal should never be made, the French company are to have a large grant of land in the centre of Egypt, and would establish in Egypt a colony whose complaints against the Egyptian Government, well or ill-founded, would give the French Government pretences for interfering in all the internal affairs of the country.’¹

¹ Ashley’s ‘ Life of Palmerston,’ vol. ii. pp. 326-7.

Mr. Gladstone, on the other hand, thought the wiser policy was to cultivate, instead of everlasting suspicion, relations of friendship and commercial interest with France. But Lord Palmerston could not see it; and in a letter to Mr. Gladstone in 1862 he expatiates on his favourite theme, the French bugbear. 'We have,' he says, 'on the other side of the Channel a people who, say what they may, hate us as a nation from the bottom of their hearts, and would make any sacrifice to inflict a deep humiliation upon England. It is natural that this should be. They are eminently vain, and their passion is glory in war. They cannot forget or forgive Aboukir, Trafalgar, the Peninsula, Waterloo, and St. Helena. Increased commercial interest may add to the links of mutual interest between us and them; but commercial interest is a link that snaps under the pressure of national passions.'¹

I am not at all disconcerted, then, by finding myself opposed to great names on the question of Russian policy in the East; for I find that great names are rather more liable than small ones to be the victims of national prejudices and delusions. Moreover, the great names are in this case by no means all on one side. Names, quite as great at least as any that can be cited on the opposite side, are in favour of a policy of conciliation and confidence towards Russia; and, what is more important, reason and facts are on that side, as I shall now endeavour to show.

The fear of Russia arises entirely from her supposed designs upon our Indian Empire; and those designs resolve themselves into either an intention to attempt the conquest of India, or to stir up rebellion among

¹ Ashley's 'Life of Palmerston,' vol. ii. p. 224.

our Indian subjects by way of diversion while Russia is striking a blow for the possession of Constantinople. Let us consider these two aspects of the question separately. And first as to the intention of Russia seriously to attempt the conquest of India.

Have those who attribute such a design to Russia taken the trouble to consider the possibilities and motives of such an enterprise? The prevalent belief of the Russophobists is that Russia is pursuing her conquests in Central Asia for the purpose of pushing her frontiers to some convenient point from which she may be able to develop her attack upon our Indian possessions. But Russia would be stark mad to venture an attack upon India with an army short of 200,000 men. Considering the scale of her preparations for attacking Turkey at this moment, it would seem, indeed, that double the number of troops I have supposed would be nearer the mark. But let us suppose that under favourable circumstances 200,000 men would give her a fair chance of success. That host, with all its necessary equipments, she would have to transport through a country which, to a considerable extent, may be described as a trackless desert; a country where it would be so difficult to obtain supplies that the army would have to be broken up and sent in detachments to avoid starvation. The operation would therefore occupy many months; and, meanwhile, what should we be doing? We should be doing two things. We should be making preparations to meet the Russian attack on a scale commensurate with the occasion and with our vast resources; and our agents would be busy stirring up disaffection in the rear of the Russian army, and cutting off her communication with her base over an extent of roadless ter-

ritory which it would be quite impossible to defend. Considering the difficulties and dangers Russia had to encounter in attacking so puny an antagonist as the Khan of Khiva, it is easy to estimate the risks she would have to face in her march to India.

But let us suppose, for argument's sake, that her army would escape the perils I have indicated, and which in fact would be inevitable, and that it arrived, 200,000 strong and well supplied, at the base of the range of lofty mountains where she would find us fresh and ready to give her a warm reception, with inexhaustible resources at our back to enable us to continue the struggle. Defeat to the Russian army under such circumstances would be annihilation. Its prestige gone, swarms of enemies would rise up behind and around it to cut off its retreat; and the blow of so great a disaster would not only imperil the Asiatic position of Russia, but would shake her to her centre even in Europe.

Let us, however, make another concession for the sake of argument. Let us suppose that our arms received a check in our first encounter with Russia. This, no doubt, would be serious, as it might encourage disaffection on the part of some of our native population. But we should have made ample preparation for such a contingency, and with the certainty of being able to rely on the loyalty of our most warlike tribes in the emergency, we should be able to dispute the advance of Russia step by step, while at the same time harassing her in the rear.

But if, contrary to all reasonable calculations, Russia should succeed in breaking our power in India and driving us to our ships, she would, in that case, have to conquer India anew for herself. Her only

chance of subduing us would be by seducing some of our Indian subjects from their allegiance and turning their arms against us. But does anyone suppose that the natives of India would help Russia to break our yoke in order to enable her to impose her own in its place? If they assisted her to get rid of us at all, it would certainly be with the view of getting rid of foreign rule altogether. So that Russia, after driving us out of the country, would find herself surrounded by hostile populations—both those who helped her against us and those who fought on our side.

The defeat of the English power in India, therefore, supposing it possible, would only be the beginning of Russia's troubles. She would have to subdue India for herself and reorganise its civil service; and no one, who will take the trouble to think out the problem, can doubt that long before its solution India would accomplish the ruin of Russia.

And what could be Russia's motive for wantonly provoking so tremendous a risk? Would England, would any Power in Europe, make such a venture? The loss of India would be a great blow to our prestige and pride; but it may be doubted whether it would affect us prejudicially in any other way. It offers an outlet for a certain portion of our educated population; but its possession adds considerably to our expenditure, and greatly embarrasses our diplomacy; and it is certain that if we had not inherited our position we should not undertake any risk to acquire it. Why then should Russia risk her existence as an Empire on the doubtful venture of conquering India? Of what use would India be to her? It would be more likely to impoverish than to enrich her exchequer, even if she got possession of it without striking a blow. Nor does

Russia need any outlet for a redundant population. On the contrary, her population is far too sparse for the area over which she rules. In short, if the enemies of Russia could devise a scheme more certain than any other to lead her to ruin, it would be to tempt her to engage in the desperate hazard of a war of conquest in India. So that, in refusing to believe that Russia harbours any design of the sort, I am not crediting her with any transcendental unselfishness, or any extraordinary freedom from political ambition. I am simply judging her by the rule of selfishness, and giving her credit for nothing beyond the possession of reasoning faculties; and I say that for Russia to meditate the conquest of India would be to prove to the world that the Russian nation is a nation of lunatics. The most unreasoning of Russophobists will hardly commit himself to such a conclusion as that, and therefore I think I may dismiss into the realm of phantasms and chimeras any arguments based on the assumption that Russia has any thought, or is ever likely to have any thought, of seriously disputing with us the sovereignty of India.

But is it equally certain that Russia would not use her position in Central Asia as a means of stirring up insurrection in India, in the event of a war between her and England? Russia would certainly give an example of magnanimity, not likely to find imitators among other nations, if she did not avail herself of any legitimate advantage which she might possess for paralyzing her adversary. But then I turn the edge of this argument against the Russophobists, and will show them in a few words that it is fatal to their case.

The only *casus belli* likely to arise between Eng-

land and Russia would be some question of aggression on the part of Russia in South-eastern Europe ; notably any movement having for its object the conquest and permanent possession of Constantinople. But England is not specially interested in Constantinople except in its relation to our Indian Empire. The possession of Constantinople would, no doubt, give Russia a certain advantage, supposing her to contemplate an invasion of India. But an invasion of India for its own sake would argue so deliberate an intention to commit political suicide on the part of Russia, that we may dismiss all arguments founded on such an hypothesis to the region of nursery fables. If Russia ever attack India, it will be for the sole purpose of facilitating the accomplishment of her policy in the Turkish Empire. What follows, then, if the supreme object of true English statesmanship is the furtherance of 'British interests' ? Why, that the English Government should use all its influence and diplomacy to help Russia to the possession of Constantinople. *Ex hypothesi*, Russia has no motive to vex us in India except in so far as it might enable her to checkmate us in Turkey. On the other hand, we have no motive, from a British-interest point of view, to checkmate Russia in Turkey, except for the purpose of preventing her from vexing us in India. Hence it follows that English interests would be subserved, instead of jeopardised, by substituting Muscovite sovereignty for that of the Turk on the shores of the Bosphorus. So that the 'British-interests' politicians have been scandalously thwarting the very policy which they have been so frantically recommending. Put Russia in possession of the fair lands, which now lie fallow under Turkish misrule, and can anybody out of Bedlam imagine that she will turn

her back on the wealth which lies so invitingly at her feet, in order to waste her resources on the stake—fatal if lost, profitless if won—of conquering India? If I do not advocate the substitution of Russian for Turkish rule at Constantinople, it certainly is not because I fear any danger to British interests from such a solution of the Eastern Question, but because I do not think that an exclusive regard to its own interests is the noblest aim of a nation's ambition. The capital of European Turkey belongs of right to the population of European Turkey; and it ought not to be beyond the capacity of the confederate statesmanship of Europe to make such provision as shall leave Constantinople to its rightful owners when the Ottoman's hour of doom shall have struck.

But where is the evidence that Russia has any designs at all upon Constantinople? Let us look at a few facts.

Russia has never had a more ambitious or imperious sovereign than the Emperor Nicholas, and there can be no doubt that he might have occupied Constantinople in 1829, had he so willed. This has been disputed of late, but, as it seems to me, on insufficient grounds. Even granting the state of the Russian army to have been as bad as some have described it—and the evidence seems to me far from complete on that subject—still Russia could have readily reinforced her army, while Turkey, on the contrary, was utterly exhausted; her fleet destroyed; her old army system abolished; her new levies demoralised by defeat; her exchequer empty. Nor would the Great Powers have made any forcible resistance to the march of Russia on Constantinople. Nevertheless the Emperor of Russia made peace with Turkey on terms which, under the circumstances, cannot be called severe. And Count

Nesselrode explained the reasons in a letter to the Grand Duke Constantine, written three months after the peace of Adrianople. In that letter, addressed, be it observed, to a member of the Imperial family, and therefore free from all taint of any political *arrière-pensée*, the Chancellor of the Russian Empire says :—

‘ There was nothing to prevent our armies from marching on Constantinople and overthrowing the Turkish Empire. No Power would have opposed, no danger menaced us, if we had given the finishing stroke to the Ottoman Monarchy in Europe. But, in the opinion of the Emperor, that Monarchy, weakened and under the protection of Russia, is more advantageous to our interests, political and commercial, than any new combination which might force us either to extend our territories by conquest, or to substitute for the Ottoman Empire some States which would not be slow to compete with us in power, in civilization, in industry and wealth. It is on this principle that his Imperial Majesty has always regulated his relations with the Divan.’

In the summer of 1853 Count Nesselrode made a similar disclaimer on behalf of his Imperial master ; and in the course of the same year the Emperor held his memorable conversations with Sir Hamilton Seymour on the condition of the Sick Man. From those conversations I quote the following extracts :—

‘ With regard to Constantinople, I am not under the same illusions as Catherine II. On the contrary, I regard the immense extent of Russia as her real danger. I should like to see Turkey strong enough to be able to make herself respected by the other Powers. But if she is doomed to perish, Russia and England should come to an agreement as to what should be put in her place. I propose to form the Danubian Princi-

palities, with Servia and Bulgaria, into one independent State, placed under the protection of Russia; and I declare that Russia has no ambition to extend her sovereignty over the territories of Turkey.

‘England might take Egypt and Crete; but I could not allow her to establish herself at Constantinople, and this I say frankly. On the other hand, I would undertake to promise, on my part, never to take Constantinople, if the arrangement which I propose should be concluded between Russia and England. If, indeed, Turkey were to go suddenly to pieces before the conclusion of that convention, and I should find it necessary to occupy Constantinople, I would not of course promise not to do so.’

On a subsequent occasion the Emperor said:—

‘I would not permit any Power so strong as England to occupy the Bosphorus, by which the Dnieper and the Don find their way into the Mediterranean. While the Black Sea is between the Don, the Dnieper, and the Bosphorus, the command of that Strait would destroy the commerce of Russia, and close to her fleet the road to the Mediterranean. If an Emperor of Russia should one day chance to conquer Constantinople, or should find himself forced to occupy it permanently, and fortify it with a view to making it impregnable, from that day would date the decline of Russia. If I did not transfer my residence to the Bosphorus, my son, or at least my grandson, would. The change would certainly be made sooner or later; for the Bosphorus is warmer, more agreeable, more beautiful than Petersburg or Moscow; and if once the Czar were to take up his abode at Constantinople, Russia would cease to be Russia. No Russian would like that. There is not a Russian who would not like

to see a Christian crusade for the delivery of the Mosque of Saint Sophia ; I should like it as much as anyone. But nobody would like to see the Kremlin transported to the Seven Towers.'

The present Emperor of Russia and his Chancellor have always held the same language ; and so have the most influential organs in the Russian press—the *Moscow Gazette*, for example. I am well aware that a number of people will exclaim that Russian pledges and assurances cannot be trusted. I believe that they are as trustworthy as English pledges and assurances. But that is a point on which I do not dwell now, for I am quite willing to let the protestations of Russia about Constantinople be tested by the rule of national selfishness. Would it benefit Russia to possess Constantinople ? I believe, on the contrary, that it would be fraught with danger to her—the danger which Nicholas foresaw, and which all farsighted Russians are aware of. The political centre of gravity of the Empire would inevitably be removed to the Bosphorus. Russia would become dualistic—one half Muscovite, the other Byzantine ; and she would break in two. Moreover, if Russia seized Constantinople, she would be obliged to absorb the rest of European Turkey, except perhaps Bosnia, which might go to Austria ; and this would prove a morsel very difficult of digestion. Neither the Slaves nor Greeks desire absorption by Russia, and to annex them by force would be a hazardous experiment. If she succeeded in assimilating her new subjects, she would infallibly create interests and jealousies which, on the removal of the Court to Constantinople, would eventually split up the Empire. If she failed to assimilate Greeks and Slaves in one homogeneous nationality, she would simply have created a new

Poland, much more troublesome and dangerous than the old one.

We may be sure that Russian statesmen have well weighed these considerations, and that they are not likely to risk the ruin of the Empire for the doubtful gain of being masters of Constantinople. But, however that may be, there is one argument against Russia's possession of Constantinople which renders all other arguments superfluous, inasmuch as it is decisive—the argument of impossibility. If England gave Russia *carte blanche* to occupy Constantinople, there are at least two Powers which would step immediately to the front and put a veto on the acquisition. If the master of Constantinople could command the outflow of the Don and Dnieper, he would also command the mouths of the Danube; and Germany and Austria are too much interested in the free navigation of that river ever to allow a third Great Power to dominate its communication with the Sea. The eagles of Russia cannot float from the battlements of Constantinople before the morrow of the day on which she has humbled the pride of Germany and Austria combined in a battle of Armagedden. If anyone thinks it worth while to speculate on the period of time likely to elapse before that event takes place, I think he will agree with me that we may safely disembarass our political action of all considerations arising out of any possible conquest by Russia of Constantinople. It will be time enough for us to think of drawing the sword when Germany and Austria are prostrate under the Russian Bear. Nor need we draw it even then if 'British interests' be the primary motive. The more Russia is enticed towards Turkey, the farther is she drawn away from India

But then we are told that Russia is so faithless and so cruel that no dependence can be placed upon her. And Poland and Khiva are flung into the arena as arguments which ought to close all further discussion. But granting, for a moment, the validity and force of this objection, I am not advocating a policy of blind dependence upon Russia. Assuming her to be all that her enemies describe her, the policy which I recommend is the policy of prudence, tried by the rule of British interests; and the policy which the British-interests politicians recommend is a policy of infatuation. At the same time I am far from accepting the picture of Russian character and policy which some speakers and writers have lately drawn for our information. I believe that Russia, Government and people, is as worthy of confidence as any other great Power in Europe, England included. England, I fear, would come badly out of the ordeal by which Russia has been tried of late. I have before me at this moment two pamphlets which have been greatly praised by the friends of Turkey in this country, and in which Russia is put on trial for every sin that can be arrayed against her during a period of about a century and a half. A verdict of guilty is then triumphantly returned, and a sentence of penal servitude for life demanded. But suppose a Russian pamphleteer were to apply a similar test to the character of the English nation, how would it fare with it? He would have no occasion to travel out of the well-beaten paths of English literature; for he would find there materials in abundance wherewith to neutralise the attack of his English antagonist. He would find in a standard historian, for example, the following account of atrocities committed in Scotland less than a century and a half ago, by an Eng-

lish regular army under the command of a Royal Duke :—

‘The Castles of Glengarry and Lochiel were plundered and burned ; every house, hut, or habitation met with the same fate, without distinction. Men were either shot upon the mountains like wild beasts, or put to death in cold blood, without form of trial. The women, after having seen their husbands and fathers murdered, were subjected to brutal violation, and then turned out naked, with their children, to starve on the barren heaths.’¹

A more recent author gives a still more dreadful account of the events which followed the battle of Culloden :—

‘Quarter was seldom given to the stragglers or fugitives, except to a few who were kept back for public execution. The wounded were most of them put to death on the following day. . . . A general carnage ensued ; the moor was covered with blood ; and the men, according to an eye-witness, what with killing the enemy and dabbling their feet in the blood, and splashing it about one another, looked like so many butchers. The road from Culloden to Inverness was strewn with dead bodies. The wounded insurgents were permitted to be left among the dead on the field of battle, stripped of their clothes, in bitter weather, till the afternoon of Friday, when detachments were sent to knock on the head those who were still alive ; and some who had resisted the effects of the continual rains which had fallen till this time, were then dispatched. A barn, where many of the wounded Highlanders had taken refuge, was set on fire, and the unfortunate wretches burnt together within the walls.

¹ Hume and Smollett’s ‘History of England,’ vol. vii. p. 313.

Soldiers were stationed round the building, who with fixed bayonets, drove back any miserable men who attempted to save themselves. . . . After the battle of Culloden the Duke of Cumberland fixed his headquarters near Fort Augustus, in the centre of the insurgent districts, whence parties were detached who laid waste the rebels' country, plundered their houses, burnt their cabins, carried away their cattle, and reduced their people to such misery and destitution that the women and children sometimes followed the bands of soldiers, praying for the offal of their own cattle to sustain the sparks of a flickering life. Every brutality seems to have been perpetrated in the camps and the expeditions of the conquerors, for which, if truth is told, General Hawley appears to have been personally responsible. Matrons and maidens suffered from the brutal and profligate soldiery horrors which to the women of the Highlands must have been worse than death; while races of naked native women on horseback were held at Fort Augustus for the amusement of the troops.'¹

It would not be easy to match this in the history of Russia even in the reigns of Peter the Great or of Catherine. And the Duke of Cumberland, who must be held responsible for these achievements, was voted 20,000*l.* a year by a grateful Parliament, in addition to his already princely income, for his ruthless suppression of the insurrection of 1745. Stories of a similar character might be culled in abundance out of the history of Ireland even at a later period. But let us come down to our own time. I happened to be in Russia all through the Polish insurrection of 1863, and had exceptional opportunities of getting at the facts. On the other

¹ Hozier's 'Invasions of England,' vol. ii. pp. 167-170.

hand, I know several officers who were engaged in suppressing the Indian mutiny of 1857; and in comparing the two events, I am convinced that our troops in India committed atrocities on a larger scale and of a more heinous character than the Russian troops did in Poland. In neither case, however, was there anything to compare with the horrors of Bulgaria. Many of the stories of Russian brutalities in Poland in 1863, such as the flogging of women, were proved at the time to be pure myths. Yet I have heard them lately repeated in England as though they were established facts. When men's blood is up they will often do brutal things. Why, even as lately as last year in one of our Colonies Englishmen did things, under the influence of an unreasonable panic, of which our Russophobists would not be slow to make capital if the scene were laid in Russia instead of Barbadoes. We were actually obliged to send out a Special Judge, armed with extraordinary powers, because the local tribunals could not be trusted to do justice. For instance: in the Island of Tobago 'a corporal of police had fired into a crowd, apparently with great hastiness, and had killed a woman. The people had retaliated and shot him. For this offence no fewer than sixteen prisoners were sentenced to death, and twenty-six others to penal servitude for life.' The verdicts in these cases were returned by English juries, and the sentences passed by the Chief Justice of the place, also an Englishman. The sentences were commuted by the Special Judge sent out from England, who 'found it necessary to animadvert very strongly upon the apparently systematic manner in which the Grand Jury ignored all Bills against Planters, and found true Bills against Negroes; and there was one case in which, though the Grand Jury had treated the shooting

of a Negro as no crime, he did not hesitate to pronounce it a cruel and cowardly offence.' Mr. James Holtigan Gill, 'a merchant and landed proprietor, near Bridgetown, admitted having fired his revolver into a crowd of people, and added, "I am only sorry I did not kill some one."' Negroes were, in fact, shot by the Planters in the most wanton manner; and the Grand Jury refused to return a true Bill, because they 'treated the shooting of a Negro as no crime.'

These particulars, and others like them, the reader will find related in the *Times* of the 15th of last November. How many an eloquent period would they not have pointed had the theatre of them been Poland instead of the Windward Islands!

But then there is the faithlessness of Russia in the matter of Khiva. Well, let us look at the facts. The charge against the Russian Government is that it waged an unprovoked war against Khiva, and that the Emperor lulled the suspicions of England by a deliberate promise, which he afterwards deliberately broke. And the conclusion is that we can never trust Russia again, but that we ought to go on trusting Turkey, which has broken not one promise, but every promise she ever made; and this, not once in a way, but systematically and persistently. No extenuating circumstances can be admitted on behalf of Russia; but forbearance must know no bounds in the case of Turkey. Season after season the barren fig-tree persists in producing nothing but leaves. Season after season Lord Derby continues to hope for an abundant fruitage next harvest. 'Let it alone this year also' is his everlasting cry; but not that he may dig round about it, and dress it, and remove from its trunk and branches the parasites which suck its life-blood. That would be 'coercion,'

and 'coercion' is an abomination to the Earl of Derby. For coercion involves some responsibility, and the most characteristic feature of Lord Derby's diplomacy is the skill which he has always displayed in avoiding responsibility. 'We undertook undoubtedly twenty years ago,' he said to a deputation last summer, 'to guarantee the Sick Man against murder; but we never undertook to guarantee him against suicide or sudden death.' But have we not been told, in every variety of phrase, during the past twelvemonth, that the Sick Man's life is of consequence to us, not for his sake, but for ours; in its bearing on British interests, not on political morality? Now if that be so, surely the wise policy is to ward off death altogether, not some particular kind of death. If the continued existence of the Sick Man is the essential point, where is the wisdom of closing up one of the doors by which death may enter, while leaving two others wide open? Would not the 'suicide or sudden death' of the Sick Man involve all the complications and dangers likely to ensue from his 'murder'? For the question is not about his life, but about his inheritance; and would the scramble over that be less keen and exciting because the death of the patient happened to be a sudden one? But let us return to Khiva.

It was gravely stated last December, by a correspondent in the *Times*, that 'no cause was ever assigned and no grievance alleged against Khiva.' This is an average specimen of the wild assertions which the Russophobists have been scattering broadcast during the past twelvemonth, and it proves that the writer knew nothing at all about the subject on which he was writing so confidently. Khiva has simply been a den of robbers, who availed themselves of their almost inaccessible position to harass and enslave

Russian traders and travellers. More than one Russian expedition, sent to rescue the captives, perished in the Steppes. In 1840 an expedition was on the eve of starting, when the Khan of Khiva, taking alarm, 'sent an envoy to Russia with 418 Russian captives, and the Khan issued an order forbidding the capture and purchase of Russians. The next year Nikiforof went to Khiva as Russian envoy ; but although he awed the Khan and all his officials into a state of complete deference, he was obliged to depart without accomplishing anything. In 1842 another Russian envoy (Danilefsky) was sent to Khiva, and succeeded in inducing the Khan to sign a treaty promising not to engage against Russia, or to commit acts of robbery and piracy. The only real result, however, of this mission was the extension of the geographical knowledge of Central Asia. Every article of the treaty remained a dead letter. The very next year Khiva protected the famous brigand Kenisar, and soon after sent emissaries among the Kirghis, and even sent forces against the Russian forts in the Steppe. . . . Although the Khivans from that time on did not stop their old habit of capturing and enslaving the Russians on the banks of the Caspian, and of pillaging and enforcing tribute from the Kirghis, who were under Russian subjection, and stirring them up to mutiny, yet the attention of Russia was so much taken up with the territory on the Syr Darya, and the strengthening of their position in that region, that they were unable to insist on the Khan of Khiva complying with their demands. The letters of the Governor-General were either unanswered, or messages were returned which were considered insolent, and when in 1869 and 1870 the Khivans were accused of aiding the rebellion of the Kirghis,¹ and of committing many

¹ On this point General Tcherniaief is at issue with the

depredations on the Russian post routes, the patience of the Government became exhausted. It was resolved that some means must be taken to put an end to this state of things.’¹

The Khivans became alarmed at the preparations to invade them, and sent embassies to the Russian authorities. ‘The Government,’ says Schuyler, ‘consented to deal with the Khan on two conditions: first, that he should immediately free all Russian prisoners in Khiva, as well as the Kirghis held there; and, secondly, that he should give satisfactory explanations to the Governor-General of Turkistan about the letters received from him. These conditions were, however, refused by the Khan.’ Mr. Schuyler, who has evidently a strong feeling against Kaufmann, thinks that he was in favour of the Khiva expedition for personal reasons. But this, even if true, does not dispose of the other reasons which were certainly sufficient to justify it.

Yet ‘no cause was ever assigned and no grievance alleged’ against Khiva! Those who approve of the Abyssinian and Coomassie wars, and of our numerous wars against frontier tribes in India, are hardly in a position to dispute the right of Russia to reduce the lawless and marauding Khivans to order.

But there is the pledge of Count Schouvaloff on behalf of the Czar, that ‘not only was it far from the intention of the Emperor to take possession of Khiva, but positive orders had been prepared to prevent it.

Russian Government. He thinks that the rebellion of the Kirghis on this occasion was caused by some new regulations of the Ministry of War, ‘liberal and humane in their aims,’ but misunderstood by the Kirghis.

¹ Schuyler’s ‘Turkistan,’ vol. ii. pp. 330–2.

He (Schouvaloff) gave the most decided warrant that I might give positive assurances to Parliament on this matter.'—*Lord Granville's speech in the House of Lords*, Jan. 3, 1873.

Let us see how the promise was fulfilled. Khiva was invaded from four sides, and was at last taken; but not before one of the invading columns had nearly perished in the desert. General Kaufmann proclaimed at once 'to the population of the Khanate the mercy of the Emperor, on condition that they should live quietly and peaceably, and occupy themselves with their business and with agricultural labour. The excitement of the population gradually ceased, the streets again filled with people, and the bazaars were reopened. Strict orders were given at the same time to the soldiers to send out no foraging parties, and to take nothing from the inhabitants, but to pay cash for everything at the bazaars. This was a mercy which the inhabitants had scarcely expected, and to which they were not accustomed; and not only were they not thankful for it, but they began to abuse it. . . . In one case a soldier was sentenced to be hung for stealing a cow. The evidence of the native accuser had been accepted without other proof, and he was only able to escape because his comrades and the officers of his company proved that the cow had followed the company ever since crossing the Amu Darya.'¹

The next thing General Kaufmann did, after enforcing this extremely severe discipline among his troops, was to insist on the abolition of slavery throughout the Khanate of Khiva, thus giving freedom to 30,000 slaves. The Turkomans, however, recaptured

¹ Schuyler, ii. 252-3.

a number of the freed slaves, chiefly Persian captives, and massacred, after the Russians left, about 1,600 of them. Peace was at last made with the Khan on condition of his paying a war indemnity of 274,000*l.*, extending over twenty years, and ceding to Russia the right bank of the Amu Darya. The Khan, indeed, begged General Kaufmann to annex the whole of the Khanate, on the ground that he was at the mercy of the roving Turkomans, who would prevent him from fulfilling his engagements when the Russians retired. General Kaufmann, however, declined the dangerous gift, and took only as much territory as would ensure to the Russian gunboats and trading barges free navigation of the river. For other purposes the ceded territory is valueless; and, in fact, Russia soon afterwards made over part of it to a neighbouring Khanate.

The treaty did not require the ratification of the Emperor of Russia, and the first intimation he received of its terms was the text of the document itself, six weeks after it had been signed and published in the Official Gazette of Turkistan.

Now surely it is hardly fair to construe the Emperor's general promise, not to annex Khiva, so rigorously as to make him amenable to a charge of breach of faith for annexing so much territory as sufficed to afford some security against the continued aggressions of Khivans and wandering Turkomans. Let us take a parallel case. When the present Emperor of Germany entered Alsace at the head of his army in 1870 he issued a proclamation, which might naturally be interpreted as implying a promise that it was not his intention to annex any part of French territory. And this promise was turned into a certainty by the Crown Prince in a proclamation published a week afterwards at Nancy, and in the *Times*

eleven days later—that is on August 30. The first sentence in the proclamation is, ‘Germany makes war on the Emperor, not on the people of France.’ Surely the legitimate inference is, that with the overthrow of the Emperor of the French the quarrel between the two nations would cease to have any justification. Within a fortnight that catastrophe happened, and republican France offered the olive branch and a war indemnity, provided her soil was left intact. The terms were rejected; the war lasted for some months longer; and France had to pay an enormous indemnity in addition to the loss of two provinces. Now, will anyone maintain that a promise not to annex France debarred the annexation of any part of France? and, secondly, that the German Government can never again be trusted on account of the seeming breach of faith suggested by the discrepancy between the Crown Prince’s pledge and the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine? Nobody doubts the perfect honour of the Crown Prince of Germany, and the general fidelity of the German Government to its engagement. And why should the Russian Emperor and Government be tried by a harder rule?

The truth is, that the Emperor of Russia, in ignorance of the circumstances, had promised more than it was possible to perform. This is the opinion of persons who cannot be accused of any bias in favour of Russia. ‘Unfortunately,’ says Schuyler, ‘the intentions of the Emperor and of the Government of St. Petersburg in this, as in other cases, were over-ridden by the inexorable logic of facts. Circumstances arose which made it impossible to carry out these intentions.’¹ Sir Henry Rawlinson is one of the leading

¹ Turkistan, ii. 365.

advocates of an anti-Russian policy; yet Sir Henry Rawlinson, immediately after the pledge of the Emperor of Russia through Count Schouvaloff, declared publicly that it was quite impossible for the Emperor to keep his promise. Russia, he said, in an address to the Royal Geographical Society, ‘has volunteered a declaration—and apparently in all honesty—that her object is a mere vindication of her honour, and that she has no intention to annex the country, or hold it as a conquered province; but she has not sufficiently considered, I think, that by thus evacuating the country after having once occupied and ruled it, she will lose far more than she gained before. Orientals can only explain such evacuations—and not altogether wrongly—as the result of weakness; and let me ask what effect such a serious blow to her prestige would be likely to have on the kindred communities of Tashkend and Samarcand? We have had ourselves bitter experience of thus trifling with Oriental feeling. Although we fully retrieved our Afghan disasters in 1842, and did not evacuate Cabul and Candahar till the whole country lay completely at our mercy, yet it is still generally believed throughout Asia that we were driven out of the country, and the Seikh invasion of India, and more remotely the great India mutiny, were both attributable to the blow which our political credit thus sustained.’

So thought Sir Henry Rawlinson before the Russian expedition set out for Khiva, and after the publication of the terms of peace he declared that some degree of annexation was inevitable. ‘To evacuate the country,’ he said, ‘immediately after its occupation, and to retire within the old limits of the Empire, would be not only to sacrifice all the prestige of success, all the advan-

tages indeed of the advance, but to compromise very seriously the whole Russian frontier in Central Asia.’¹

Sir C. Wingfield, another good authority on Eastern questions, declared in the House of Commons: ‘I do not believe Russia will retire from Khiva; and, what is more, I hope she will not. I wish to see this nest of robbers—these scourges of humanity—reduced to order and civilization.’ That Russian rule does reduce the tribes of Central Asia to order and civilization is the testimony of all whose evidence is of any value. One of the most valuable books lately published on Central Asia is Major Wood’s *Shores of Lake Aral*, and he fully confirms Mr. Schuyler’s favourable impressions of Russian rule in Turkistan. Captain Burnaby’s *Ride to Khiva* appears to me to be a work of little or no value; for, with the most honest intentions, it was impossible that he could glean anything but crude, and often most false impressions, by a scamper through an unknown country, whose history and institutions he had not previously studied. An instance of what I mean is furnished by a letter from Captain Burnaby, lately published in the *Times*. He found that Armenian women in Asia Minor are kept as secluded as Mussulman women, and he jumped to the conclusion that they are as degraded as the slaves of the harem. The truth being that the women remain secluded for no other reason than to avoid outrage from the Mussulmans, not daring to go to Church, in some places, oftener than once a month.

Now with all these facts before us, is it reasonable, is it right, is it even decent, to denounce Russia’s annexation of a strip of Khiva as a crime so monstrous, so exceptionally wicked, that the promises of the Government

¹ England and Russia in the East, pp. 326, 400.

and the pledged word of her Emperor can nevermore be trusted? There is not a Government in Europe which would not be excommunicated by the application of so rigid a rule; and if England means to enforce it, she will have to begin by placing herself under the ban. The fidelity of Russia to her engagements in Central Asia need fear no comparison with some of our doings in India. To take one or two cases. Under the old *régime* we borrowed several millions from the King of Oude, which we coerced him into lending, and for which we forced him to accept a worthless bit of territory belonging to the Rajah of Nepaul.¹ Eventually we annexed his whole kingdom; for good reasons, no doubt; but reasons, nevertheless, of which we are slow to see the force when Russia applies them in Central Asia.

Where, again, in the history of Russia—I had almost said in the history of the civilized world—can anything be found equal in iniquity to the infamy of English policy in forcing the opium trade on China? At this moment England is deliberately poisoning a whole nation for a bribe of 7,000,000*l.* sterling per annum. Opium is a poison more mischievous in its effects than prussic acid or arsenic. These kill their victims speedily, and so end their misery. Opium commits its ravages with slow seductive stealth, coiling itself gradually round the body and mind of its victim till he is reduced at last to the condition of a paralytic idiot. Meanwhile he has become the parent of a stunted progeny, and in this way the most populous nation in the world is being systematically reduced to a state of cretinism for the sake of ‘British interests.’ And so well have British statesmen known the dele-

¹ See Hansard, vol. cxl. p. 1856.

terious effects of this poisonous drug that they have prohibited its use in India. The Finance Minister of the East India Company in 1822 declared: 'The leading feature of our policy was to limit the manufacture, and to prevent as far as possible the sale and use of it in our territory, except for medicinal purposes.' In 1817 the Court of Directors of that same Company wrote as follows to the Governor in Council:—

'We wish it to be clearly understood that our sanction is given to these measures *for the internal consumption of opium, not with a view to the revenue*, but in the hope that they will tend to restrain the use of this pernicious drug, and that the regulations for *the internal use of it* will prevent its introduction into districts where it is not used. *Were it possible to prevent the use of the drug altogether, except for the purposes of medicine, we would gladly do it out of compassion to mankind.*'

The sincerity of a 'compassion to mankind,' which strictly limits itself to that portion of the race which may be made subservient to the sordid interests of those who thus proclaim their compassion, may fairly be questioned. The Directors are careful to distinguish between the 'internal consumption of opium,' and its foreign consumption 'with a view to revenue.' 'Out of compassion to mankind,' they will 'prevent as far possible the sale and use of it in our territory, except for medicinal purposes.' Out of regard to their own interests, they will promote as far as possible, even to the *ultima ratio* of grapeshot, the use of it, free from all restrictions, beyond their own borders. England has waged several destructive wars against China for the sole and simple purpose of forcing the Chinese to purchase, to their ruin, the poisonous

drug which, 'out of compassion to mankind,' we laid under a strict embargo 'in our territory.' We instituted a regular smuggling trade in opium along the coast of China, and picked quarrels with the Chinese Government in order to compel it to grant us increased facilities to conduct our poisoning operations. The annals of Christendom may be searched in vain for any war more wholly unjustifiable, more irretrievably wicked, than our war with China in 1857. The ostensible cause of it is thus related in a most painful article on 'The Opium Trade in China,' in the October number of the *Church Quarterly Review* :—

'A swarm of native ships, manned by the off-scouring of China, buy registers from us, and, under the name and freedom of British ships, ply their disloyal and debasing traffic. One day the Chinese Government see their opportunity; they seize one of these boats in the act of smuggling, they capture the men and the opium; but the ship has been registered to be British, and they are called upon to surrender them. They do so; they give back the whole number unhurt. But this is not enough for our Consul, Sir John Bowring. He declares the British flag to have been insulted; he demands a national apology; and, more than this, he uses that occasion to demand, in an ultimatum, that which the Chinese had for years resisted on political grounds of their own, the free entrance of our Consul-Envoy to Peking. He demands these imperious war terms, under threat of at once throwing shot and shell into the defenceless and vast commercial city of Canton. The Chinese protest; they confess a mistake; they give up the men of this pirate *lorcha*; only they deny their intention to insult the British flag; they refuse to own a crime, or to acknow-

ledge the right of these strong reprisals. For this war is at once proclaimed ; the British fleet is ordered up ; there is a bombardment, a terrible and destructive display of warlike force ; a large and definite war is begun.'

Nor in all this had we even the poor excuse of having a technical justification, even from the point of view of our own atrocious policy. We had, it is true, granted a British register to this Chinese pirate, owned and manned by Chinese, though smuggling our opium into Chinese ports, in violation of the Customs. But the term of the register had expired before the *lorcha* was seized ; and the English authorities knew it when they declared war, though the Chinese did not. 'The *lorcha, Arrow*,' wrote Sir John Bowring to Commissioner Yeh, 'lawfully bore the British flag under a register granted by me.' 'The *Arrow*,' wrote Sir John Bowring to his agent Mr. Parkes, 'had no right, I fear, to hoist the British flag ; her register expired on the 27th of September.'¹

But the incident offered an opportunity for forcing more of our opium on the Chinese, and was therefore seized with avidity. We conquered China ; we imposed a war indemnity upon her ; we compelled her to abolish her prohibition of opium ; nor would we even agree to a high tariff. And so our revenue from this infernal trade suddenly increased from 3,000,000*l.* to 7,000,000*l.* The Chinese Government, now at our mercy ; appealed, in earnest and pathetic language, to that mercy, but appealed in vain. Prince Kung and his Ministers addressed a humble, but most dignified letter to our Minister in China. 'Day and night,' said the petitioners, 'they consider the question of this opium trade, and the more they reflect upon it, the greater

¹ 'Church Quarterly Review' for October, pp. 21-2.

does their anxiety become ; and hereon they cannot avoid addressing his Excellency very earnestly on the subject. The Chinese merchant supplies your country with goodly tea and silk ; but the English merchant empisons China with pestilent opium. Such conduct is unrighteous. Who can justify it ? What wonder if officials and people say that England is wilfully working out China's ruin ? Were both nations vigorously to prohibit the growth of the poppy, both the traffic and the consumption of opium might be put an end to. . . . Day and night they [the petitioners] give to this matter most earnest thought, and overpowering is the distress and anxiety it occasions them. Having thus presumed to unbosom themselves, they would be honoured by his Excellency's reply.'

But no answer was ever made to this touching appeal from the Prime Ministers and Government of an Empire numbering 400,000,000 of human beings. The Chinese Government derives a revenue of 1,500,000*l.* from the opium trade ; but it declared itself more than willing to sacrifice this, if only England would co-operate with it in putting a stop to the trade. But England turned a deaf ear to the pleading of this vast nation, and, with its mailed hand upon its throat, forced its poison down into it. It is a sad spectacle to see a Pagan Government reminding a Christian nation, which deems itself in the van of civilisation, of the elementary principles of morality. And we wonder that Christianity makes no great way among a people to whom we offer Bibles in one hand, while with the other we compel them to imbibe our poison ! And for this great crime—the crime of demoralising and murdering a whole nation—the country at large is responsible ; for it returned a large majority in favour of the Government which

carried the policy, after both Houses of Parliament had deliberately condemned it. Surely, if there is a God on high who loves righteousness and mercy, and abhors iniquity, our sin will find us out. And with this sin upon our heads, ‘unhousel’d,’ ‘unanel’d,’ we put on fine airs, and lecture down from the pedestal of our own hypocrisy upon the sins of nations more righteous than ourselves. Because Russia, for the protection of her subjects and commerce, wrests from a horde of Asiatic robbers a strip of arid land, we, forsooth, are the people to instruct her in international morality! We are they who have a right to lift up sanctimonious eyes, and thank God that we are not as other men are, particularly as this Russian!

Another of the charges lately trumped up against Russia is the clause in the Treaty of Koutchouk-Kainardji, by which she obtained for herself some special privileges in respect to the free navigation of the Black Sea. That was in the year 1774; and if we are to ransack the history of the eighteenth century for the purpose of adjudicating on the comparative morality of the nations of Europe, I feel far from certain that England would get the best of Russia in the award of a righteous tribunal. The Treaties of Utrecht and of Aix-la-Chapelle both belong to the eighteenth century. By a clause in the former ‘England secured for herself the profitable trade in slaves with the Spanish Colonies, the possession of Minorca, Gibraltar, and St. Christopher.’ By a clause in the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, ‘the Spaniards were again to buy their slaves from England (*i.e.*, the Asiento-Treaty was to be renewed).’¹ If, then, we are to

¹ Schlosser’s ‘History of the Eighteenth Century,’ vol. iii. pp. 90, 444. The language of these clauses, in the original French text, is worth quoting. Article 12 of the Treaty of Utrecht says:

balance crimes, I am inclined to think that, of the two, the crime of obtaining at the sword's point an exclusive right to sell human beings to the horrors of the Middle Passage and the degradation and agony of the Spanish Plantations is, on the whole, rather greater than the crime of obtaining an exclusive right to send corn through the Straits of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. For this great sin England, it is true, has made reparation. But our efforts in putting down slavery lag, even now, somewhat behind those of Russia. The abolition of serfdom in Russia stands almost, if not quite, unique among the triumphs of national self-sacrifices. It is thought by some that the Emperor carried his emancipation policy against the determined opposition of the nobles and landed proprietors; but it is a mistake. Powerful as an Emperor of Russia is in many respects, he would have been helpless in a social revolution of this sort without the good-will of the great body of those who were chiefly interested. To him indeed belongs the glory, the immortal fame, of having conceived, initiated, and pressed to its accomplishment the emancipation of the serfs. But, though he encountered opposition, he was nobly seconded by the great majority of the owners of serfs. And the sacrifice which they made was no mean one. The serfs were valuable property, though *adscripti glebæ*, and were always reckoned as such in the sale or purchase of an estate.

‘Le roi d’Espagne accorde à la Grande-Bretagne, à l’exclusion tant des sujets espagnols que de tous les autres, le droit d’introduire les nègres dans les différentes parties de l’Amérique espagnole, *el paseo del asiento de negros*, pour en jouir pendant trente ans, à partir du 1^{er} mai, 1712.’ The Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1742, simply says: ‘L’Angleterre demande et obtient le renouvellement de son commerce qualifié: Droit d’introduction des nègres.’

When a proprietor had more serfs on his estate than he could profitably employ he allowed them to work on other estates, and even to seek employment in distant parts of the Empire, and in some cases in foreign countries. Kind landlords sometimes educated promising children of serfs, and sent them into the world to seek their fortune. But they were legally liable to be called back at their master's bidding, and were also bound, if he so willed, to pay him a certain percentage out of their earnings.

The serfs were thus a source of considerable profit to their owners ; and this profit the owners lost by their emancipation. They submitted to the loss, however, as a sacrifice to the cause of country and humanity ; and, in addition, parted with as much land as was considered necessary for the maintenance of the freed serfs. The question was full of difficulties, moreover, and was confessedly a leap in the dark. It was impossible to predict the immediate or proximate economic and political results of the experiment. Yet the venture was made in a noble spirit of trust, that what was in itself right could not but, in the long run, be beneficial to Russia. And the people who have given the world this rare example of self-mastery, this striking proof of an enlightened and humane patriotism, have been compared of late, to their disadvantage, to the foul assassins of Batak ; and this, too, not merely by ignorant declaimers in the press, but by 'most potent, grave, and reverend seigniors' ! I should like to see the looks of England's landed proprietors if it were seriously proposed to divide a portion of their estates among our pauper peasantry.

Another accusation against Russia is that she treats her subject population in Asia with as much cruelty

as their old Mahometan masters—some say with more cruelty. I do not know upon what evidence such accusation is founded; but I know that it is in flat contradiction to all the evidence with which I am acquainted. A change for the better becomes immediately apparent in every Asiatic province which falls under Russian rule. Some of the evils of previous systems, no doubt, lurk for some time in her administration. But what is this but our own experience in India? I have before me a Blue Book on ‘Torture in India,’ published by the Government of England in 1855, and the following extracts from it may suggest the proverbial prudence which should restrain dwellers in glass houses from indulging in the pastime of throwing stones.

With regard to the administration of justice, Mr. Malcolm Lewin, a Judge in the Supreme Criminal Court of Madras, says: ‘There is no degree of guilt which a police officer will hesitate to incur when the object is to convict.’

With respect to torture, he says: ‘Torture is almost universal in the district . . . One prisoner appears before me with the loss of an arm, the amputation having been performed after he reached the Court’—that is, for the purpose of extracting from him the evidence which was required.

In the debate which this Blue Book occasioned in the House of Lords, the Earl of Albemarle made a speech founded on the evidence before him, from which I quote the following extract:—

‘When the Mahometans took possession of the country they, regarding themselves as true Believers and the Hindoos as heretics, and being also conquerors, doubled the tax; and when we Christians succeeded to

them, we adopted their reasoning and accepted the double tax. It would have been well if we had stopped there. But by arbitrary exactions, and by an absurd system of collecting the revenue by means of irresponsible gangs of robbers, we have actually doubled the amount of taxation, and brought it up to 100 per cent.’¹

That was twenty years ago, and we have made great progress in our government of India since. Russia has also made great progress in that interval. And this is the cardinal difference between both of us and Turkey. Abuses, maladministration, opportunities lost, wrongs and cruelties,—all these are blots which Russia and England, in common with other civilized Governments, have alike to deplore. But we have institutions, and a press, and a public opinion, which have only to be informed, in order to move in the right direction. And they are moving. Turkey is not, except to her grave. Nor can she while Islam bars the way.

And now I think I have given some valid reasons in proof that British interests have nothing to fear from the Russian Bugbear. In the course of a short correspondence on the general subject, sixteen years ago, between Lord Palmerston and Sir G. C. Lewis, the latter expressed his opinion in language so pertinent to the present occasion that I offer no apology for quoting it. Lord Palmerston opened the correspondence as follows :—

‘ You broached yesterday evening what seems to me a political heresy, which I hope was only a conversational paradox, and not a deliberately adopted theory. You said you dissented from the maxim that preven-

¹ Hansard, vol. cxi. p. 1566 (February 29, 1856).

tion is better than cure, and that you thought that, instead of trying to prevent an evil, we ought to wait till it had happened, and should then apply the proper remedy.'

This 'political heresy' Lord Palmerston accordingly sets himself to combat; and he cites as illustrative arguments in favour of his view the 'timidity' of the Duke of Wellington, in 1830, in not preventing the French from taking possession of Algeria—'a possession which, whenever we have a war with France, will give us trouble and cause us much annoyance;' and the 'timidity' of Lord Aberdeen 'when the Russians prepared to invade the Danubian Principalities.'

Sir G. Lewis remained unconvinced, and for reasons on which our Russophobists would do well to ponder.

'As a medical maxim,' he replied, 'it is true universally that prevention is better than cure; but it seems to me that this maxim must be applied with discretion in political, especially in foreign politics. If the evil is proximate and certain, or highly probable, no doubt a wise statesman will, if he can, prevent it. But with respect to remote and uncertain evils, the system of insurance may be carried too far. Our foreign relations are so numerous and so intricate, that if we insure against every danger which ingenuity can devise there will be no end of our insurances. Even in private life it is found profitable for those who carry on operations on a large scale not to insure. One thing, according to the received though not very precise saying, insures another. A man who has one or two ships, or one or two farmhouses, insures. But a man who has many ships, and many farmhouses, often does not insure.'

'We keep in every country of the world a paid

agent, often of great activity and intelligence, whose time in general is only half employed, and whose business it is to frighten his own Government with respect to the ambitions and encroaching designs of foreign Governments. I am not seeking to undervalue the services of diplomatic and consular agents. I know that, on the whole, they are of great benefit to the country which employs them. But it is natural and proper that they should keep a sharp look-out for the machinations of foreign Governments, and that their imagination should sometimes be stronger than their reason. If their advice were listened to, we should be perpetually taking expensive precautions against remote and problematical risks.

‘Generally, I think that our foreign policy is too timorous ; that we are apt to be scared by bugbears, and to underrate the power of England, and the fear of it entertained by foreign nations. I do not believe that the possession of Algeria by France is any real disadvantage to us. It acts as a constant drain on the military and financial resources of France, and in the event of a war would necessarily fall into our hands, if we were able to obtain and maintain the empire of the sea. The possession of Egypt and Malta did nothing for France in the late war.

‘If an evil is certain and proximate, and can be averted by diplomacy, then undoubtedly prevention is better than cure. But if the evil is remote and uncertain, then I think it better not to resort to preventive measures, which insure a proximate and certain mischief. The evil may probably never occur ; the cure may perhaps be simple and inexpensive, and may not imply hostilities. It seems to me that our foreign relations are on too vast a scale to render it wise for

us to insure systematically against all risks ; and if we do not insure systematically, we do nothing.’¹

How apt an illustration is our present policy of that which Sir George Lewis deprecated ! The evil has been actually upon us for eighteen months, and we refuse to cure it for fear the cure should peradventure lead to some contingent hurt to British interests. We will not lend a hand to put out a fire in our neighbour’s house, lest one of the firemen should conceive a fancy to take up his abode in the house, and prove a disagreeable neighbour. Too true is it that ‘ our foreign policy is too timorous,’ because ‘ we are apt to be scared by bugbears.’

¹ Ashley’s ‘ Life of Lord Palmerston,’ vol. ii. pp. 331–3.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHO ARE THE CREDULOUS ?

THIS question has been brought forcibly, and in part personally, before me in the course of the controversy on the affairs of Turkey; and I propose to examine it in a separate chapter, because one of the chief obstacles to a right appreciation of the Eastern Problem is undoubtedly the credulity of one side or the other. In discussing the question I shall rest my case entirely on the ground selected by the friends of the Turkish Government in this country, namely, the alleged atrocities, respectively, of Russia in Turkistan and of Turkey in Bulgaria and Bosnia. And first as to the former.

It is always a satisfaction in controversy to be able to grapple with an opponent face to face; and that satisfaction I am happy to enjoy in this instance. In a speech delivered in the Preston Corn Exchange, on the 24th of last October, and reported at length in the *Times* of the succeeding day, I find the following passage. The orator was criticising Mr. Gladstone, whom he accused, among other things, of 'vindictive malignity' towards Her Majesty's Government because 'they possess the power which he would gladly wield himself;' and then, coming to close quarters, he tackles Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet as follows:—

‘But when Mr. Gladstone goes on to describe in that pamphlet the bloodshed and outrages which had been committed as crimes exceeding all modern example, I think he was guilty, unconsciously perhaps, of a little inaccuracy; pardonable indeed, but still an inaccuracy, because since those matters began to be discussed I have been reading an account given by Mr. Schuyler, in a work published not many months ago. This gentleman, as you remember, was the American Consul at Constantinople, and he it was who first furnished anything like an intelligible account of the Bulgarian atrocities. He it is whom Mr. Gladstone in his pamphlet puts forward as the principal witness. In this work, written by Mr. Schuyler, I find an account of an expedition which was undertaken only last year by Russia against some people in the centre of Asia; and, taking his account, that war appears to me about as unrighteous a war as was ever waged by the powerful against the weak. There were during that war barbarities and outrages as detestable and vile, and more cold-blooded, than the Bulgarian outrages. And they were committed by Christian Russia, that Power with whom we are asked to ally ourselves for the punishment of the Turks. The soldiers were under the immediate and direct command of Christian Generals, who led them against the unhappy and miserable inhabitants of the country they had invaded—poor unhappy peasants, men, women, and children; and all for no offence that we can find, except that these unhappy ones may have fled from the homes that Russian rapacity had violated and deserted. I like to see the scales of justice held up in an equal poise, and am willing that infamous sin should be denounced; but while we are denouncing it, let us

denounce it wherever we find it, whether in the Mahometan or the Christian, in the Turk or the Russian.'

The orator who gave utterance to these remarkable opinions is no obscure ignoramus, but Her Majesty's Attorney-General and head of the Bar of England; a gentleman whose business and training it is to master the facts of a case, to cross-examine witnesses, to sift evidence, and to separate the chaff from the grain. So much as to the speaker; and the facts upon which he founds his conclusions are easily accessible. They all lie inside the two volumes of Mr. Schuyler's work on Turkistan and his report on the Bulgarian atrocities. It is upon these two authorities that the Attorney-General explicitly rests his case. Let us see, therefore, what Mr. Schuyler actually does say as to the doings of Russia in Turkistan.

The Attorney-General says the expedition to Khiva 'was undertaken only last year,' *i.e.* in 1875. It was undertaken in 1873. But that is a small mistake, though an extraordinary one for an Attorney-General, speaking to his brief, to have made. The next assertion of the Attorney-General is that the expedition to Khiva was 'about as unrighteous a war as was ever waged by the powerful against the weak'—a war against 'poor unhappy peasants, men, women, and children, and all for no offence that one can find, except that these unhappy ones may have fled from the homes that Russian rapacity had violated and deserted' [? desolated]. And all this, bear in mind, is based on the evidence furnished in Mr. Schuyler's book on Turkistan, a book which the Attorney-General said he 'had been reading.' Now if the reader will consult the references which I have given in the last chapter, or, still better, if he will read the whole of

Schuyler's book, he will find that not only does it not afford a scintilla of evidence in support of the Attorney-General's assertions, but that it flatly contradicts them. What Schuyler says on this point may be compressed into a few sentences. The first contact between Russia and Khiva took place in the year 1620. In that year the Cossacks of the Ural, nominally Russian subjects, but practically independent, and doing pretty much what they liked, plundered some Khiva merchants, and organized three separate expeditions against Khiva, all of which ended disastrously for the Cossacks.

It was not, however, till the year 1700 that any serious intercourse took place between the Governments of the two countries. In that year 'an ambassador from the Khan Shaniaz came to Peter the Great, and begged him to take the Khivan nation under Russian protection, which he agreed to do, and confirmed this consent in 1703 to the new Khan.' There the matter ended till 1713, when a Turkoman came to Astrakan, was converted to Christianity, 'and told many stories of the gold which was to be found along the valley of the Amu Darya, and how the Uzbeks had closed the old channel of the stream which had flowed into the Caspian; and suggested to the Russians to break down the dam, and restore the river to its former channel.' These stories took effect, and in 1717 an expedition was fitted out under Prince Bekovitch, who defeated the Khivans in a decisive battle on the banks of the Amu Darya, about a hundred miles from Khiva. 'The Khan,' says Schuyler, 'surrendered himself entirely to the mercy of the Russians, and, after obtaining the full confidence of Prince Bekovitch, proposed to him to go and take actual possession of Khiva, after dividing his army into several parts for the greater

convenience of provisioning it. This was no sooner done than the Khivans treacherously fell upon the separate portions of the expedition, massacred them almost without exception, and sent the head of Prince Bekovitch as a present to the Amir of Bokhara, who, however, refused to accept it. Even this disaster did not prevent an ambassador of Peter's, the Italian Florio Beneveni, from penetrating to Khiva, and being well received there. This was in 1725, a few months after Peter's death. Subsequently a large number of Russian embassies visited the country, but none of them were able to bring the Khivan Khan to terms, or to induce him to stop capturing and enslaving Russians, or even to free those who were already in his hands.'

This state of things became so intolerable at last that an expedition was sent in 1829, under General Perovsky, to bring the Khivans to terms. But two-thirds of the expedition perished in the desert, and the remainder returned in a miserable plight. From that year till 1873 the Khivans went on plundering and enslaving Russians, some of them soldiers and officers belonging to the Imperial army. Treaty after treaty was made with successive Khans; and of those treaties, 'every article,' says Mr. Schuyler, 'remained a dead letter,' till at last 'the patience of the Government became exhausted,' and 'it was resolved that some means must be taken to put an end to this state of things.'

All this is told in black and white in Schuyler's chapter on 'the Khivan Campaign and its Consequences;' ¹ yet the Attorney-General of England, addressing a crowded audience of his countrymen last October, calmly declares: 'In this work, written by

¹ Turkistan, ii. 328.

Mr. Schuyler, I find an account of an expedition which was undertaken only last year by Russia against some people in the centre of Asia; and, taking his account, that war appears to me to have been about as unrighteous a war as was ever waged by the powerful against the weak! What is one to think or say? I really feel helpless before this portentous manifestation of prejudice, so dense, so impenetrable to the light of the plainest facts, that, having those facts in his hands, the Attorney-General declares them to be precisely the reverse of what they are. If he had placed an albino on the platform of the Preston Corn Exchange, and deliberately told his audience that he was a negro, with black complexion, black hair, and black eyes, he would not have been guilty of a grosser perversion of the truth than that involved in his statement about the unrighteousness of the expedition to Khiva. And all this phantasmagoria of apocryphal history was patronisingly paraded as a crushing refutation of 'a little inaccuracy' on the part of Mr. Gladstone.

This is bad enough; but we have not yet sounded the full depth of the Attorney-General's prejudices. Not only was the war one of the most unrighteous perpetrated by the strong against the weak, but it was a war on the feeble and defenceless, on 'poor unhappy peasants, men, women, and children, and all for no offence that one can find, except that these unhappy ones had fled from homes that Russian rapacity had violated.' And this violation was of a character which the Attorney-General describes as follows: 'There were during that war barbarities and outrages as detestable and vile, and more cold-blooded, than the Bulgarian outrages.'

Here, then, are two assertions: first, that the Russians

made war upon entirely innocent and 'unhappy peasants, men, women and children.' In other words, it was a war against non-combatants, chiefly women and children; for the women and children form the great majority of the peasantry in Central Asia as elsewhere. And all this, again, 'one can find' in Schuyler. To Schuyler therefore let us go. His account is that as the troops approached the vicinity of the town of Khiva they were exposed 'to constant attacks from small bodies of the enemy.' When they began to put their batteries in position before the walls of Khiva, 'they were attacked by sorties of the enemy; and as they approached the walls, they were exposed to the full fire of the guns mounted over the gate, which were well aimed. The cannonade on both sides continued for some time, and General Verevkin,' who commanded one of the four columns, 'was severely wounded in the head.' Then a deputation came out from the city 'to ask for a cessation of the cannonade and for conditions of peace.' The Russian officer in command agreed to cease firing and to refer to General Kaufmann as to the conditions of peace, provided the Khivans did not renew the fire. But 'no sooner had the deputation departed than the Khivans on the walls again began their fire, and a second envoy then appeared, saying that the Khan should not be held responsible for the firing, as this was done by the Yomud Turkomans, over whom the peaceful inhabitants of the city and the Government had no control.' This was followed by another cessation of fire on the part of the Russians, and a renewal of it on the part of the Khivans. The Russians then 'stormed and captured the north gate, with a loss of 15 killed and wounded.' 'At the moment this was taking place, General Kaufmann was

receiving the peaceful submission of the city on the other side.'

Not a word in all this about 'poor unhappy peasants, men, women, and children.' The Russians had to fight their way into Khiva, on one side, against armed combatants. They succeeded without sustaining or inflicting much loss of life; and not a hint is dropped by Schuyler as to anything approaching to inhumanity. On the other side of the city Kaufmann entered peacefully, and not a single human being is recorded to have been hurt.

So far as the capture of Khiva is concerned, then, all that the Attorney-General says about a war upon 'poor unhappy peasants, men, women, and children,' is a pure romance. There is not a word or syllable in Schuyler, his own authority, which lends even plausibility to it as an invention.

But what about the 'barbarities and outrages as detestable and vile, and more cold-blooded, than the Bulgarian outrages'? Here, again, Schuyler is the Attorney-General's authority, and I shall therefore not travel beyond the pages of Schuyler, so far as Turkistan is concerned; but I shall take Schuyler's and Baring's reports together as regards the Bulgarian atrocities, because the Attorney-General had read both when he made his speech. Now what do Messrs. Baring and Schuyler say with respect to the demeanour of the Turkish troops as touching the property of the Bulgarian towns and villages which they occupied? That they carried off all they could, and destroyed the rest, including dwelling-houses, churches, and school-houses; that they had recourse to horrible tortures in the hope of discovering some concealed treasures; and that in the few instances in which Bulgarians ventured to claim

back part of the stolen property, they were invariably ill-treated, and, in some cases, killed. This was the character of the Bulgarian outrages in respect to the property of the vanquished. Now for the 'barbarities and outrages as detestable and vile, and more cold-blooded,' of which the Russians were guilty in Khiva. 'General Kaufmann,' says Schuyler, 'occupied the Khan's palace, and placed a guard there to preserve the property and the safety of the harem, the inmates of which had remained.' 'These arrangements being made, General Kaufmann declared to the population of the Khanate the mercy of the Emperor, on condition that they should live quietly and peaceably, and occupy themselves with their business and with agricultural labour. The excitement of the population gradually ceased, the streets again filled with people, and the bazaars were re-opened. Strict orders were given at the same time to the soldiers to send out no foraging parties and to take nothing from the inhabitants, but to pay cash for everything at the bazaars. This was a mercy which the inhabitants had scarcely expected, and to which they were not accustomed; and not only were they not thankful for it, but they began to abuse it.' And then comes the story of the soldier, who was sentenced to be hanged for stealing a cow, on the evidence of a native accuser, and only let off on clear 'proof that the cow had followed the company ever since the crossing of the Amu Darya.'

So much as to outrages in respect to property. In respect to chastity and honour, Schuyler knows of none on the part of the Russians, from the first start of the expedition to Khiva till its return. What the Bulgarian atrocities were on that score it is needless to repeat. Some of them are safe from exposure from their un-

mentionable cruelty and vileness. Again I confess my helplessness in presence of Sir John Holker's historical conjuring. And all this, remember, was delivered as a rebuke and refutation of 'a pamphlet' (Mr. Gladstone's) 'which, in my humble opinion,' says the Attorney-General, 'contained many exaggerated, many wild and visionary propositions and ideas, and certainly a pamphlet which put forth assertions which were glaringly unjust.' Well, I can only exclaim, with Dominie Sampson, 'Prodigious!'

Perhaps, however, the Attorney-General refers, though he does not say so, to the expedition against the Yomud tribe of Turkomans. But even if his statement were literally true—and I shall show presently that it is exactly the reverse—of that expedition, it would not justify his sweeping and unqualified accusation. For his language applies to the purpose and conduct of the expedition against Khiva, and not to an unexpected and incidental episode of the campaign.

But let us look at the facts of the expedition against the Yomud tribe, as they appear in the pages of Schuyler. And, first, let me put the case at its very worst, after the manner of Russomaniacs, by tearing one or two passages from their context, and then see what result this mode of sifting evidence will yield. Mr. Schuyler gives the report 'of an eye-witness,' from which I make the following extracts:—

'When we had gone about twenty-five miles from Khiva, General Golovatchef said before a large number of officers in my presence: "I have received an order from the Commander-in-Chief; I hope you will remember it and give it to your soldiers. This expedition does not spare either sex or age. Kill all of them." After this the officers delivered this command to their

several detachments. The detachment of the Caucasus army had not then arrived, but came that evening. Golovatchef called together the officers of the Caucasus and said: "I hope you will fulfil all these commands strictly in the Circassian style, without a question. You are not to spare either sex or age. Kill all of them." The old Colonel of the Caucasus said, "Certainly, we will do exactly as you say."

This witness then goes on to describe various acts of cruelty, which he saw with his own eyes, and mentions one in particular—'a mother, who had been riding on horseback with three children, was killed, together with one of the children, while another had a sabre cut through its arm; the third, apparently unwounded, being engaged in the vain effort of trying to wake up its dead mother.'

All this may fitly be described as wanton and most guilty cruelty, and nothing can be said in justification of it. But we are engaged in comparing two classes of outrages, and I say deliberately that all that Schuyler's eye-witness says, taken at its worst, belongs to a class of outrages altogether different from those of Bulgaria. In the former, we have the case of soldiers, sent on an expedition against a warlike tribe of barbarians, cutting down all they met as they rode swiftly on. But there were no acts of deliberate cruelty in cold blood, and no outrage upon a woman. In the latter, we have the case of towns and villages, which had given no pretext for hostility, first induced to give up their arms under solemn promises of protection to their persons and property, and then, when they were defenceless, first dishonoured, and afterwards massacred with every circumstance that could add horror to the bitterness of death. Taking the Russian case at its worst, therefore,

there is absolutely no room for comparison between it and the Bulgarian atrocities; so different are they from each other.

But is it fair to take the Russian case at its worst? Who is Mr. Schuyler's 'eye-witness'? All that the world knew about him when the Attorney-General made his speech is represented by the letters G R O M O F. We have learnt since that he was a sutler, and we know that persons of his class are not among the most trustworthy of mankind. They are apt to get into trouble with commanders-in-chief and other officers; nor have they always proved themselves above the temptation of taking petty revenges for real or imaginary wrongs. Remember, in addition, that Schuyler was not there himself, and did not receive Gromof's story till long after the events which it relates had happened. Now suppose evidence of this kind were offered in an English court of justice, in a case in which the Attorney-General was counsel on the other side, what would he do? He would at once object to it as inadmissible—that is, as no evidence at all; and his objection would be at once sustained by the Court. In other words, evidence which would fail to convict a costermonger in the Seven Dials, on a charge of stealing a pocket-handkerchief, is held sufficiently conclusive by the leader of the English Bar to convict a nation of eighty millions of human beings of 'barbarities and outrages as detestable and vile, and more cold-blooded, than the Bulgarian outrages'!

Nor is this all. Mr. Schuyler goes out of his way to discredit the most important part of Gromof's narrative, namely, the speech which he puts, twice repeated, into the mouth of General Golovatchef. 'Notwithstanding the facts stated by Mr. Gromof,' says Mr.

Schuyler, 'from all the information I have been able to collect, I quite agree with Mr. MacGahan, that General Golovatchef personally is innocent of the savagery which accompanied the Turkoman campaign. He did nothing but unwillingly obey orders, and tried rather to mitigate than to increase their effect.'¹ But if we are to credit Gromof, the great criminal was Golovatchef, and he alone. For, according to Gromof, Golovatchef not merely repeated and reiterated the orders which he professed to have received from Kaufmann, enjoining an indiscriminate massacre without regard to age or sex, but he expressed his personal 'hope' that the orders would be strictly carried out. And so far from 'trying rather to mitigate than to increase their effect,' he did just the contrary, giving to his superior's orders a meaning which, at least, they *need* not bear, which the whole narrative clearly shows that they were not intended to bear, and which, in the sequel, they certainly did not bear; for the alleged order of Golovatchef was not carried out. Kaufmann's order, which Golovatchef is said to have interpreted as above, instructed his lieutenant 'to give over the settlements of the Yomuds and their families to complete destruction, and their herds and property to confiscation.' The question is whether this means that the villages alone were to be destroyed, or that habitations and inhabitants were to share the same fate. The language is capable of either interpretation; and I believe that the ambiguity is in the original also. We are thus thrown back upon other evidence, and one important item is given by Schuyler himself for the elucidation of the problem. Another officer found it necessary on a subsequent occasion to chastise the

¹ Turkistan, ii. 363.

Yomud Turkomans, and the chastisement consisted, according to the official report (quoted by Schuyler) in 'successively traversing and destroying all the various settlements of the Kul Yomuds.¹ This is the form of language used in General Kaufmann's order; but there it stands without explanation. Here we have the explanation: 'The troops were especially enjoined to confine themselves to the destruction of houses and movables, and the seizure of cattle, *without touching the inhabitants.*'¹

It seems clear, therefore, that the savage speech attributed to Golovatchef by the sutler Gromof may be dismissed as apocryphal; for not only is it an unnecessary development of Kaufmann's order, and not only is it inconsistent with the character for humanity which both Mr. MacGahan and Mr. Schuyler give to General Golovatchef, but it is absolutely inconsistent with the rest even of Gromof's own narrative, as I shall now very briefly show.

The Turkomans, and the Yomud tribe in particular, were the great disturbers of the peace. While the Russian expedition was still on its way to Khiva, the Khan sent an envoy to ask for peace, but 'at the same time urged the General not to change his conduct towards the Turkomans, whom he regarded as unruly subjects, and as really his worst enemies.' Afterwards we find the Turkomans repeatedly breaking truces to which they had agreed, and re-enslaving or massacring hundreds of slaves whom the Russians had set free. In their encounters with the Russians it was their custom to 'frightfully mutilate' the prisoners who fell into their hands. This is stated by Gromof. Kaufmann was given to understand that as soon as his back was turned the Turkomans would resume their reign of

¹ Schuyler, ii. 376.

terror over the Khanate, and prevent the Khan from fulfilling the terms of the treaty. There was, moreover, great danger of their harassing the homeward march of the Russian troops. For these reasons Kaufmann deemed it necessary to cripple them, and at the same time teach them a severe lesson. He ordered them accordingly to pay 300,000 roubles (41,000*l.*) as their share of the war indemnity imposed on the Khanate. Of this sum one-third was to be paid within ten days, and the remainder within five days more. The tribe, 'after some hesitation,' agreed to these terms.

Schuyler, at this point, accuses Kaufmann of 'an evident breach of faith,' and thinks that 'his real meaning was war.' Schuyler's opinions must not be confused with his facts; and the merit of his book, in this matter, is that he supplies the reader with evidence which leads, as I think, to a conclusion different from that which he has himself adopted. So it is, I believe, in this instance. It is true that Golovatchef was sent to watch (not to attack) the Yomuds, before the expiration of the term within which they were to pay the fine imposed upon them. His orders were as follows: 'To follow more closely the payment of the contribution by the Yomuds, I ask your Excellency to start with your detachment for Hazavat on July 7 (19, O.S.), and to encamp in a suitable place. If your Excellency sees that the Yomuds are not occupying themselves with getting together money, but are assembling for the purpose of opposing our troops, or perhaps even for leaving the country, I order you immediately to move upon the settlements of the Yomuds which are placed along the Hazavat canal and its branches, and to give over the settlements of the Yomuds and their

families to complete destruction, and their lands and property to confiscation.'

They were not to be attacked, then, unless, instead of collecting the promised contribution, they showed signs either of attacking the Russian troops, or of leaving the country—*i.e.*, of going into the steppe and interrupting the communications of the expedition through a desert which had already nearly proved fatal to one of the columns. Golovatchef, whom Schuyler pronounces humane and 'innocent,' was to use his own discretion in the matter; and finding that the Yomuds still showed no signs of collecting the money, but, on the contrary, were assembling together with the evident intention either of running away or of attacking the troops, he burned their villages along the road. This was followed by another order from Kaufmann, approving Golovatchef's conduct, and informing him at the same time that he (Kaufmann) had allowed the hostages to go, in order that they might influence their tribes and *save them from ruin*. He further added,—*'If the Yomuds become submissive, stop ravaging them, but keep watch of what is being done among them, and at the least attempt to migrate carry out my order for the final extermination of the disobedient tribe.'*

Have we here the case of a man who was making use of a mere dishonest *ruse* in order to entrap a tribe which had given 'no offence' (kidnapping, truce-breaking, and murdering are 'no offences,' apparently, in the estimation of the Attorney-General), to the doom which he had deliberately prepared for them,—namely, a savage and treacherous massacre, sparing neither age nor sex? Or have we the case of a commander who considers that the safety of his army depends on his thoroughly crushing the Yomud tribe, whom, how-

ever, he is anxious at the same time to 'save from ruin?'

But the Yomuds had no intention of 'becoming submissive.' They greatly outnumbered the Russians. 'The camp of the enemy was all about us,' says Gromof. 'We saw them on every side. They seemed numberless. . . . Suddenly we saw some Turkomans creeping up from the reeds on one side. A number of Cossacks, without order, at once started forth, but before they could ride 200 paces the men in the picket were entirely cut to pieces without having had a chance to fire a shot, the Turkomans having stolen in the meantime camels from different parts of the camp, where they were out of reach. The men were frightfully mutilated. We buried them the same day. The Cossacks were greatly enraged at this,'—and it explains their killing without giving quarter. They were dealing with foes who set at nought all the rules of civilised warfare.

This 'hard fighting with the enemy,' as Schuyler (ii. 358) calls it, went on for some days. 'On the 27th' (of July), he says, 'at night, General Golovatchef had intended to make an attack upon the Turkoman camp, but just as he was about starting, his own camp was attacked by the Turkomans, and had it not been for the presence of mind of the commander of the sharp-shooters, the Russians would probably all have been massacred. In the meantime, the Turkomans had cut off communication between General Golovatchef and Khiva, and for five days General Kaufmann received no reports.'

Kaufmann was at last obliged to go to the rescue of Golovatchef, and after severe fighting and much slaughter, the Turkomans, on the first day of August, 'showed signs of yielding.' The attack of the Russian

troops was at once stopped, and Kaufmann added 10,000 roubles to the 300,000 previously imposed on the Yomuds.

These are the dry facts of the story as they are related in Schuyler's book. It is probable enough that there was much cruelty, and that a woman here and there may have been cut down. This might easily have happened accidentally. I have myself seen in Russia and Lapland men and women dressed and muffled up so exactly alike, that it was quite impossible, at least for a stranger, to distinguish the sex. Much of the fighting, moreover, took place in the dark, in consequence of night surprises by the Turkomans; and this may account for the death of women and children, of whom, after all, very few appear to have been hurt. Surely nothing but prejudice of the kind which theologians call 'invincible ignorance,' could drive a sensible man into the belief that we have here the case of 'barbarities and outrages as detestable and vile, and more cold-blooded than the Bulgarian outrages.' Why, not only is there no analogy between the two, but they have scarcely a feature in common. Another marked distinction between the two cases is the attitude of public opinion in the two countries respectively. Rumours reached St. Petersburg and Moscow that cruelties had been committed in the expedition against the Yomuds, and the press at once took up the cause of the Turkomans, and denounced, with a due reserve as to the probability of the rumours proving unfounded, the policy of adopting in Central Asia a system of warfare which would not be tolerated in Europe. When the Turkish press exhibits a similar alacrity in denouncing the rumoured cruelties of Turkish Pashas, even I may possibly begin to believe

in a possible future for Turkey. Hitherto, however, the surest road to the eulogies of the Turkish press has been through scenes of horror like that of Batak. Mr. Schuyler is anything but an admirer of General Kaufmann; but when he has occasion to pass judgment generally on the operations of Russia in Asia, he does it in these words: 'The Russian movements in Central Asia have been marked by great discipline and humanity.'¹

My criticism on the Attorney-General's speech would be incomplete without quoting the piece of good advice which he obliquely administers to Mr. Gladstone at its close: 'I always thought it was rather an admirable and prudent thing not to begin to talk until you knew what to talk about.'

Here, then, we have a considerable section of educated opinion in England actually believing that Russian policy, especially in Central Asia, is characterised by atrocities, not merely as bad as the Bulgarian atrocities, but even worse. And this is believed, not on weak evidence, or even on no evidence, but in the teeth of evidence which proves the contrary. The delusion—for it is nothing else—is perfectly sincere. One meets it constantly in society as a bar to all rational discussion, and it finds its culmination in the chief of the English Bar, who ought to set an example, beyond all others, of sifting the evidence on which he solicits a verdict.

This credulity, this avidity to swallow, without examination or reflection, any story, however inherently improbable, which casts discredit on Russia, is only equalled by the incredulity which refuses to believe, on the clearest evidence, anything which tells against Turkey. The history of the last eighteen

¹ Vol. i. p. 75.

months is full of illustrations of this impenetrable incredulity; but two cardinal instances will suffice for my purpose. These are the obstinate belief in the impossibility of impalements taking place nowadays in Turkey, and the slowness to believe in the Bulgarian atrocities weeks after all the rest of Europe had ceased to have any doubt. This state of mind is so curious from a psychological point of view, that it may be worth while to expose it in some detail. And first as to the improbability of impalements taking place in European Turkey at the present day.

The story sent by me from Belgrade, and afterwards, when the truth of it was challenged, by Dr. Liddon from Paris, was as follows:—In the beginning of last September Dr. Liddon and myself passed down the Save on an Austrian steamer, having Bosnia on our right and Austrian territory on our left. On the Bosnian side of the river were a number of Turkish military blockhouses—I think six in all—and one considerable encampment at the junction of the Save and Drina. At each of these blockhouses was a stake (at one of them there were two) about the height of a lamp-post, perhaps treble the circumference of a salmon fishing-rod at the thick part, and tapering to a sharp point. The stakes were all in front of the blockhouses. Three of them were quite close to the river, and one of them I saw at a distance of certainly not more than twenty yards. They struck Dr. Liddon and myself as odd, and we could not guess what they were intended for. The possibility of their being used for impalement never occurred to us. On passing the second blockhouse Dr. Liddon asked the steward of the steamer, as a matter of curiosity, what the stakes meant, and was told, to his extreme surprise, that they

were used for impaling insurgents. The steward went into particulars, explaining that the victims lived in their agony from eight hours to two days and a half. At the third blockhouse there were two stakes, one of them, which was considerably slenderer than its fellow, having a prong sticking out near the top. On my directing the attention of one of the officers of the steamer to these two stakes, he told me in Italian (explaining that he was a native of Trieste) that they had been used for impaling Christians. I then asked if he could tell me the use of the prong on the slenderer of the two stakes. 'Yes,' he said. 'You see that stake is thinner than the other near the top. Well, the weight of the body would drive it down too far upon the stake, and so produce death sooner than the Turks wish. The prong, therefore, is intended to support the body, in order to prolong the torture.' The fifth blockhouse was on the spur of a wooded hill, some sixty yards above the river, and perhaps one hundred yards from the steamer; certainly not more. In front of it, about six yards from the window, was one of the stakes which I have described, and upon it a human figure, bareheaded, and with his arms tied behind his back. This last circumstance has been carped at because I had stated, on the authority of Bishop Strossmayer, that the victims were impaled with their faces towards Austria, by way of insult to Christendom. 'How could you see,' it has been asked, 'that the hands were tied behind the back if the impaled figure had its face towards you?' The objector would have saved himself the trouble of asking the question if he had tested its relevancy on the person of the first friend he met. I, at least, can tell without the slightest difficulty whether a man who is looking me in the face has

his hands behind his back or not ; and I presume that the only way in which a dead body could keep its hands behind its back would be by having them tied there. Nor is this the only reason which makes the objection a foolish one. It betrays, like the despatches of Consul Holmes, an entire ignorance of the facts and local circumstances. The Save is a very winding river, sometimes doubling back upon itself. In consequence of this we were enabled to see all round the figure, and also to see it against the sky, against the blockhouse, and against the mountain. One of the passengers on board the steamer was a Roman Catholic priest living in the neighbourhood, whose duties, as a member of the Croatian Parliament, took him frequently up and down the Save. He too had told us that the Turks had impaled a number of insurgents during the past eight months, and when we pointed out the figure on the stake to him, he said, ‘Doubtless that is one.’ He would probably not have seen it if we had not called his attention to it, for he was engaged in conversation with a friend. Whether anybody else on board the steamer saw it I really do not know. Certainly neither Dr. Liddon nor myself had any conversation with anybody else on board about it. Why should we? We had no doubt about the matter.

This is the story, minus a few of the details just given, which I sent to the *Times* from Belgrade. It never occurred to me that it would have been doubted, for, quite apart from all other considerations, it was, *primâ facie*, highly probable. If such a story, by whomsoever related, had been told of England, some degree of scepticism would certainly have been justifiable ; for impalement has never been one of our cherished institutions, nor has it ever figured even

among our lawless outrages. But impalement has always been one of the commonest punishments in Turkey, and it has never been abolished. No insurrection has ever been put down in Turkey in which impalement has not figured as one of the atrocities. The readers of Finlay will not need to be told of the impalements practised on men, women, and children by the Turks in the Greek War of Independence. When Shelley wrote his *Hellas*, in 1821, impalement naturally occurred to him as one of the commonplace tortures to which the Greeks were exposed. One of the *dramatis personæ* tells the Sultan that ‘the Janizaries clamour for pay.’ ‘Go!’ replies Mahmoud:

Go! bid them pay themselves
With Christian blood! Are there no Grecian virgins
Whose shrieks and spasms and tears they may enjoy?
No infidel children to impale on spears?

Again:—

Russia’s famish’d eagles
Dare not to prey beneath the Crescent’s light.
Impale the remnant of the Greeks! Despoil!
Violate! make their flesh cheaper than dust.

Hundreds of Servians were impaled in the course of their struggles to throw off the Turkish yoke. Whenever the Turks were victorious, they had recourse to impalement. ‘Men were impaled,’ says Ranke; ‘and children, in derision of the rite of Baptism, were thrown into boiling water.’ There are men and women now living in Servia who witnessed these horrors, and who were compelled to turn a deaf ear to the agonizing cries for water from the parched lips of impaled relatives, because they knew that if they yielded to the promptings of their hearts, they would be condemned immediately to the same fate. And when these Servians witness their own kindred on

the opposite side of a narrow stream enduring the same cruelties from which their own stout arms had set themselves free ; when myriads of Christians from Bulgaria, from Bosnia, from the Herzegovina have fled to free Servia to save life and honour ; when the Porte refuses even to receive the agent sent by Servia to expostulate, and the British ambassador dismisses him with words of insolence and insult ; when Lord Derby's rejection of the Berlin Memorandum had killed all hope of foreign aid, and Servia, unable to endure the cry of anguish any longer, and disregarding the warnings of Russia and the threats of England, nobly and gallantly risks her very life to shield the victims of Turkish barbarity ; the Prime Minister of England thinks it generous and just to characterise the Servian war in the following language : ' This wicked war has gone on —this outrageous and wicked war, for, of all the wars that ever were waged, there never was a war less justifiable than the war made by Servia against the Porte.'¹

The Servians were never free from 'impalements,' while the Turks remained on their soil. Among the sights described by Mr. Kinglake in his journey through Servia in 1845 are the following :—

'The only public building of any interest which lies on the road is of modern date, but it is said to be a good specimen of Oriental architecture ; it is of a pyramidical shape, and is made up of 30,000 skulls which were contributed by the rebellious Servians in the early part (I believe) of this century.'

The other sight was that of two impaled Haiduks :² 'The poor fellows had been impaled upon high poles,

¹ Lord Beaconsfield's speech at Aylesbury ('by Authority'), p. 11.

² See p. 83, and note.

and so propped up by the transverse spokes beneath them, that their skeletons, clothed with some white wax-like remains of flesh, still sat up lolling in the sunshine, and listlessly stared without eyes.' ¹ In the frontispiece to his book, Mr. Kinglake has given a drawing of these impalements, and the stakes are exactly similar, length and all, to those which I saw on the banks of the Save, except that only one of the latter had a transverse spoke.

In one of the insurrections in Servia the ring-leaders lay down their arms on promise of pardon from the Turkish Pasha. But no sooner had he got them into his power than he carried them off in chains to Belgrade. 'The less influential of the prisoners, to the number of 150, were beheaded in front of the four gates of the city.' ² 'The more important, to the number of thirty-seven, were impaled. These were all young, high-spirited, and brave men, of good descent, who had been amongst the first to join the insurrection; and whose influence in the country induced the Turks to put them to death. In accordance with this cruel chastisement was the reckless tyranny by which the Turks thought to prevent further movements. Whilst again searching diligently for arms—for the insurrection had proved that there were still many weapons concealed—they perpetrated innumerable outrages. Mahometan gipsies would compel Servians whom they met to take off their good clothes, and receive their

¹ 'Eothen,' pp. 31-2. If this volume should chance to find its way into the hands of the lady ('M. S. H.') who sent me a copy of 'Eothen,' with a courteous letter, I hope she will accept my thanks through the medium of this note, as she gave me no opportunity of expressing them otherwise.

² Ranke, p. 193.

own ragged ones in exchange. Whatever might be found in the houses in the way of clothing, the materials of which had not been made by the women, but purchased, was taken away. Frequently, whilst making this search, the Turks would fill bags, like those out of which horses eat, with ashes, tie them under the chins of the women, and by beating upon them, cause the dust to ascend into their mouths and nostrils. Some were bound hand and foot, and thus suspended by the extremities, with heavy stones hung from the middle of their bodies. Some were flogged to death; others roasted alive on spits. Many other atrocities are known to have been perpetrated, which we must pass over in silence.’¹

And when those, who had suffered all this, risked their national existence to save their still enslaved kindred from like cruelties, the Prime Minister of England gloats over their defeat. ‘Turkey was triumphant. She had crushed those ungrateful subjects of the Suzerain.’² I have heard of gratitude ‘for small mercies;’ but I never before heard of ingratitude for nameless cruelties being charged against a nation as a high crime and misdemeanour.

I have already given instances of impalements in Bulgaria and other parts of Turkey within the last thirty years. But let us come nearer our own time. The Syrian massacres took place about sixteen years ago, and I have, in a previous chapter, shown that they were in every respect as bad and horrible as the Bulgarian atrocities. But while Syria was then the theatre of the grandest exhibition of Turkish ferocity, as Bulgaria was last summer, similar atrocities were

¹ Ranke, pp. 193–4.

² Speech at Aylesbury (‘by Authority’), p. 12.

being enacted on a smaller scale, as they are being enacted now, in other parts of the Turkish dominions. Here is what the *Times* Correspondent reports from Paris in the middle of August, 1860 :—

‘ We must not delude ourselves ; it is not in Syria alone that the evil exists. One is tempted to believe that throughout the whole Ottoman Empire a vast conspiracy, the threads of which centre at Mecca, is preparing the general massacre of the Christians. If it is only in Syria that events have been on the formidable scale we have witnessed, in other parts of Turkey isolated murders of Christians, accompanied by odious details, have become frequent. Letters from Bulgaria and Macedonia report crimes that make one shudder. I will cite but two. At Serres, in Macedonia, three priests have been impaled. At a village near Adrianople the Mussulmans seized a Christian and placed him on the cross, with an infamous parody of all the circumstances of our Saviour’s passion.’

Again, in the insurrection in Crete in 1867, the Turks impaled a number of Christians, and practised other cruelties of the most revolting character, sparing neither age nor sex.

Thus we see that down to the Bulgarian atrocities impalement has always occupied a prominent place among the cruelties perpetrated by the Turks in suppressing insurrections. The suppression of an insurrection without impalement would be an innovation on Turkish practices, a fact to be noted and recorded in Turkish history. Unfortunately, no such innovation took place. Mr. Baring mentions the case of a child ‘ impaled on a standard, and paraded in the streets in Bulgaria.’¹ At Batak Mr. Schuyler relates that one

¹ Blue Books for 1877, No. 1, p. 157.

of the chief men of the village, Trandafil by name, 'was spitted on a pike and then roasted.'¹ The Blue Books also tell of the practice of impalement as prevalent in Bosnia and the Herzegovina in 1875. On October 18 of that year Mr. Consul Holmes sent to Lord Derby a document detailing the grievances of which the insurgents complained, the infliction of impalement being one of them. Consul Holmes despatched this document before he had read it, but promised to send 'his observations on its contents,' in case he discovered any 'exaggeration'² in it. Several Blue Books have been published since then, containing numerous 'observations' by Mr. Holmes on other matters, but none on the document which accused the Turkish Government of still practising impalement in Bosnia and the Herzegovina; from which I conclude that Consul Holmes has not been able to discover any 'exaggeration.'

Such was the state of facts when I sent to the *Times* the account of the impalement witnessed by Dr. Liddon and myself on the bank of the Save. It was notorious that Turkey had always practised impalement, and Mr. Baring, Mr. Schuyler, and Consul Holmes had reported the practice as still prevalent in Bulgaria and Bosnia. Miss Irby, too, who knows Bosnia a good deal better than Mr. Consul Holmes (for not only has she lived much in the country, but she does not depend for all her information on Turkish officials), wrote an article on the state of Bosnia in the *Victoria Magazine* of July, 1875, from which I make the following extract:—

'The Moslem hatred of Christians finds vent even

¹ Blue Books for 1877, No. 1, p. 170.

² Blue Books of 1876, No. 2, pp. 29, 38.

in quiet times in many a hidden act of cruelty. At the present moment of licensed insult and revenge we read of Christians being impaled, flayed alive, and cruelties of the worst ages being committed on helpless women and children.'

My letter appeared in the *Times* of September 28, 1876. On October 3 appeared a reply, dated October 2, from the Turkish Ambassador in London, who said, that having applied to 'the proper authority,' he was 'authorised to give the most formal and categorical denial to the whole story.' Of course he was. 'The proper authority' has lately given 'the most formal and categorical denial to the whole story' of atrocities committed by the Turks in Bulgaria.¹ A comparison of dates, as Sir C. Wingfield showed in the *Times* of October 5, plainly proved that 'the proper authority' could not possibly have made any inquiry upon the subject. Nevertheless, Musurus Pasha, being thus fortified by 'the proper authority,' took upon himself to declare that 'the whole story' was a case of 'an optical delusion' and an 'abused credulity.' There was nothing surprising in Musurus Pasha saying this, for there is nothing surprising in a Turkish official saying anything. What was surprising was the avidity with which the pro-Turkish section of the English public, in the press and in society, swallowed the absurd and inherently incredible suggestions of the Turkish Ambassador. It mattered nothing that Dr. Liddon and myself produced an unanswerable mass of evidence on the other side. 'If anything was needed to make one's blood boil with indignation,' said a writer in the *Daily Telegraph*, in leaded type, 'at the credulity of our countrymen, it would be the story of im-

¹ Blue Books of 1877, No. 2, p. 75.

palement narrated by Mr. MacColl.' And this credulity was proved in the following way : ' Two hundred years have elapsed since impalement was practised by the Turks ; ' and ' when they did so, does any one in his senses suppose they erected stakes 20 ft. high for the purpose ? ' Mr. Kinglake supposes so, for he has given drawings of such stakes ; and I leave the writer in the *Daily Telegraph* to decide whether Mr. Kinglake is ' in his senses.' The *Standard* was good enough to give Dr. Liddon and myself credit for honesty ; but it added that it was quite clear our testimony could never again be accepted on any subject. The *Globe* followed suit, as did also the *Morning Post* ; and the *Pall Mall Gazette* even refused to insert a note from me in correction of a statement which it erroneously attributed to Dr. Liddon and myself. It was the same in private society. Men who are not fools on other subjects assured me quite gravely that Dr. Liddon and myself must have been mistaken. It was no use telling them that, under the circumstances of the case, there could be but two alternatives : either a veritable impalement, or a deliberate falsehood on the part of Dr. Liddon and myself. This incredulity appears to me so extraordinary that I shall put down in succinct juxtaposition the evidence on both sides.

For the truth of the story told by Dr. Liddon and myself the evidence is as follows. There is first the *primâ facie* probability of it, from what we know of Turkish history. There is next the independent evidence of Mr. Baring and Mr. Schuyler as to the fact of impalement being practised in Bulgaria last summer. There is then the document forwarded by Consul Holmes in October 1875, complaining of the torture of impalement as still inflicted on Christians in Bosnia

and the Herzegovina. And now we have Consul Freeman's despatch, suppressed by 'accident' till I chanced to discover its clue in the Blue Book. It is dated 'Bosna Serai, March 17, 1876,' and is addressed to Lord Derby. A copy was also sent to Sir Henry Elliot, who, on the 3rd of the following month, called the attention of the Porte to it in the following terms :—

'When authentic accounts of such abominations were received in Europe they must excite the indignation of the whole civilized world, and no surprise need be felt if public sympathy were on the side of those who struggled to free themselves from a Government under which they were exposed to treatment such as described. The massacre at Popovitz, which, although denied, was an undoubted fact, remained unpunished, and now these fresh horrors were committed, which would go far to estrange from Turkey the good-will of her last friends.'

The Porte makes its reply on the 16th of last November, and denies everything, *more suo*. But it makes an important admission, namely, that the Vienna papers made such a row about the impalement related by Mr. Consul Freeman, that the Turkish authorities were obliged to send a Commission to examine into the matter. The story, as told in Consul Freeman's despatch, is as follows :—

'On the 10th a certain Rado Buyich was impaled near Novi, and exposed to view for four days.'

Three weeks before Consul Freeman's despatch saw the light, the following decisive confirmation of it appeared in the *Daily News*. I leave the foreign English of the letter just as it is. It will be observed that it agrees with Consul Freeman's account in every

particular, while it gives a few more details ; the only difference being a slight variation in the spelling of Novi and Buyich :— .

‘ To the Editor of the “ Daily News.”

‘ SIR,—The Revs. Liddon and MacColl answer to the question, Are men yet nowaday impaled in Turkey ? in the affirmative, and bring special examples from Bosnia. The Consul-General, Mr. Holmes, as well as the Austro-Hungarian Consul-General, Mr. Theodorovitch, in Serajevo, deny entirely such barbarous facts ; although it is now sufficiently proved with the letter adressed by the Bishop Strossmayer, directed to the said Consul Theodorovitch, which letter was published in the Austrian journals, that about a distance of 500 paces from the Austrian frontier there have been committed such barbarous outrages. I, having been an eye-witness thereof, feel the moral duty and obligation to communicate to you such a case of impaling in the month of February, 1876, in Bosnia. Four refugees, who lived till then in Croatia, returned home in consequence of the proclaimed amnesty. And so they came in their native place, Voditchevo, district of Turkish Kostainitza, in the north-western part of Bosnia. Three of these poor refugees have been cut to pieces in Novy, and the fourth one, a smith, Rado Buitch by name, has been impaled on the railway station Doberlin, which is situated between Kostainitza and Novy, and the body of the same was left there on the same spot during two weeks on the bank of the river Una, right opposite to the Austrian village Kozibrod. I did see the poor sufferer myself, and there were with me several Austrian officers of

the Austrian regiment Archduke Ernst. The same did see also the inhabitants of the neighbouring Croatian villages. Even the Kaimakam Ali Beg of Kostainitza denied not that the aforesaid Buitch has been impaled. I published already at the same time this and the inquiries which have been made, and the investigations of the General-Commando in Agram do confirm fully all which I write now about this matter. —Yours truly,

‘HEINRICH RENNER,
‘Special Correspondent of *Golos*.’

‘Belgrade, Jan. 29.’

The following affidavit, sent to Dr. Liddon by Dr. Sandwith from Belgrade, was published in the London papers in the end of November:—

Translation of the Affidavit of Milan Paulovich, taken before the Tribunal of First Instance of Belgrade.

‘I, Milan Paulovitch, native of Novo Varosh, in Stara Serbia, interrogated as to the truth of what I have already stated to others—viz. that I have seen with my own eyes one of my fellow-countrymen fastened to a stake. I confess here that what I desire to say is the pure truth, that I have seen this thing with my own eyes, and that I am quite ready to confirm by a solemn oath what I would say. It was last year, in the second half of the month of August, some days after the Feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God, that I have seen on the hill called Tikva, quite near to Novo Varosh, the well-known Servian Slovitch, of the village of Kratova, in Stara Serbia, fastened to a stake. The Turks had taken him some days before on this same hill, and immediately afterwards

they put him on a stake. I saw him there two days afterwards, and then he was dead; but how long on the stake I cannot tell. The stake entered his body at the bottom and came out at behind his neck, near the occiput. A crowd of people saw with me this sad sight. Slovlch was a man with a pleasant countenance, very honest, and well-known.

‘MILAN PAULOVITCH.

‘Belgrade, October 30 (Old Style).’

‘The witnesses of this affidavit are the Servian citizens, Nichola Hadji Thoma and Nichola Vulichovick.

‘*Confirmation by the Tribunal of First Instance.*

‘The Tribunal of First Instance of Belgrade confirms that the man named Milan Paulovich presented himself personally before the Tribunal and repeated before the two witnesses that he knows personally all that is above written, and that he signed with his own hand.

‘J. GABRILOVICH, Member of Tribunal.

‘Belgrade, November 2 (Old Style).

‘No. 11,985 (Seal of the Tribunal).

To the above I add the following, received lately from Miss Irby by Dr. Liddon. Miss Irby, who has been living in Bosnia for some time, says that a great many more signatures of eye-witnesses might have been appended to this affidavit if it had been thought necessary. She knows the witnesses, and vouches for the *bona fides* of the document.

‘*Copy and Translation.*

‘We, the undersigned, testify and on our honour

declare that we personally and with our own eyes have seen the following cases :—

‘In the month of May, the Turks of Sauzki seized the Bosnian shepherds Vaso Tube, Branković, and Oljaca of Dobor, brought them to the wood near the Germeč mountains, impaled them alive and roasted them at a fire, whom we find the following day quite burnt on the stakes, and in the presence of many insurgents certified their names.

‘Besides this we found, not far from the same place, many hands, feet, heads, and different parts of the bodies of little children, which children had been left behind by their mothers in the flight; for there have been often cases in which a mother who had five children could only save three, but must leave the others to their fate, who were massacred in the most terrible way by the Turks in pursuit. These sad facts, of which, if necessary, we can give further proof and confirmation, we certify with our own signatures.

‘PETER UZELATZ.

‘PETER BABIČ.

‘Tishkovatz, Feb. 10, 1877.’

Then there is the evidence of Bishop Strossmayer, who told Dr. Liddon and myself that persons of both sexes had been impaled on the banks of the Save. Consul Holmes, not satisfied with our veracity on that point, sent to ask Bishop Strossmayer ‘whether it was true that he had told Messrs. Liddon and MacColl that on the right bank of the Save persons of both sexes had been impaled alive.’

‘Here is the answer to your letter,’ replied Bishop Strossmayer. ‘What I told those worthy English-

men I learnt from unimpeachable witnesses, among whom are priests in my diocese, living on the banks of the Save, and who tell me of unheard-of atrocities, of which they have been eye-witnesses . . . You will pardon me, M. le Consul-General, a remark I am about to make. In our country an opinion is prevalent that the Consuls-General obey a fixed instruction, to which they accommodate all that they see and all that they do not see. Hence arise, at least so people here think, exceptional judgments upon these events, and in conformity with the predominant idea.

‘I do not know what truth there is in these assertions ; but I notice, not without astonishment, that you and the British Consul are the only ones who have thought it necessary to elicit this answer from me. Beyond that, I am struck by the question that you put to me in your letter, as to whether I had myself seen what the English gentlemen speak of. As if it were my business to go to the banks of the Save to see what goes on there ; or as if nothing could be true which one did not see with one’s eyes.’

This straightforward answer from Bishop Strossmayer Consul Holmes regards as an evasion of the question, because, forsooth, he did not happen to repeat the word ‘impalement.’

In addition to all this the Government has published, in one of the recent Blue Books, some eight folio pages of duly attested evidence of Turkish atrocities in Servia and on its immediate borders, some of them being cases of impalement. Besides impalement, one man was ‘entirely flayed from the thighs to the feet.’ Others had red-hot irons driven into their bodies. Others were roasted slowly by being hung by the arms from the branches of trees, and a fire lit underneath

them. I have talked in Servia to eye-witnesses of these atrocities, some of them Englishmen. An English surgeon told that the Turks invariably mutilated the Servian wounded in the most horrible manner; but that, though he had made it his business to investigate the matter, he had not been able to establish a single case of retaliation on the part of the Servians. I myself can testify the kindness with which the Turkish prisoners, including some Bashi-Bazouks, were treated in Servia. I saw Servian mothers and maidens, forgetting the cruelties perpetrated by these men, visiting them in prison and showing them little kindnesses.

I could produce a great deal more evidence of impalements in Bosnia; but I wish to confine myself to what was in possession of Lord Derby, Sir Henry Elliot, Consul Holmes, and their backers in England, at the time they were denying the possibility of what Dr. Liddon and myself saw with our own eyes.

Let us now look at what Mr. Consul Holmes is pleased to consider the 'almost irresistible evidence to the contrary disregarded' by Dr. Liddon and myself.

His first despatch is dated 'Bosna Serai, October 5, 1876,' and begins thus: 'With regard to the astounding statement made to your Excellency by Canon Liddon and his friend, I have to report that neither the Turkish authorities, the Consuls, nor the people here have ever heard of anything resembling the cruelties mentioned. No statement of the kind has either appeared in any of the Slave newspapers most hostile to Turkey, and it is quite impossible to imagine that they could have occurred without immediately becoming publicly known.'

Every single statement here made by Consul

Holmes is now proved to be absolutely and literally false. On the 17th of the previous March, it was known at Bosna Serai (the very place from whence Consul Holmes dates his letter) that a man had just been impaled at Novi in full view of an Austrian village; that he was left on the stake for several days; that 'four other peasants had also been lately killed near Novi, and their heads exposed on stakes;' that in the second week in March 'the master of the Orthodox school at Priédor was killed, and his head paraded about the streets of the town on a pole to the sound of drums and other music;' and that all those atrocities, and others too horrible to be transcribed, were 'of almost daily occurrence along the north-western frontiers' of Bosnia—the frontiers, that is, on which Dr. Liddon and myself saw the case of impalement which the Foreign Office has set itself so persistently to deny. All these facts were reported from Bosna Serai, and were in the hands of Lord Derby and Sir Henry Elliot before the end of March last year. I presume also that they were duly reported to Consul Holmes, since he is Consul Freeman's superior. Moreover, 'the Turkish authorities,' put into the witness-box by Consul Holmes himself, while denying the fact, admit not only that they heard of the atrocity, but assert that 'the Vienna papers spoke of it,' so that 'the excitement which this affair caused at the time forced the Imperial authorities to inquire into it.' (Blue Books of 1877, No. 1, p. 746.) Since then, the special correspondent of the leading Slave newspaper of the day has come forward to say that he was an eye-witness, together with several Austrian officers of a regiment which he names, of this very impalement; that the Kaimakan (the chief 'Turkish authority' of the district) admitted

the truth of it; that the Austrian commandant of Agram 'fully confirmed' the fact; and that an account of the whole matter was published at the time in the *Slave* as well as in the Vienna press.

These facts were in the possession of the Foreign Office, of Sir Henry Elliot, and of Consul Holmes all through the four months in which they have been expressing their 'profound astonishment' at the 'astounding statement made by Canon Liddon and his friend,' and assuring the public that 'our credulity had been grossly imposed on,' and that, in fact, we 'had been the victims of a monstrous joke.' (Blue Book No. 1, p. 648.) And the facts would never have seen the light if the Foreign Office had not, by 'accident,' allowed one casual reference to them to appear in the mazes of some 2,000 folio pages of diplomatic correspondence, and so set me on the track of discovery.

After this exposure, it may seem superfluous to subject Consul Holmes's 'almost irresistible evidence' to any further analysis; but it is useful to do so, in order to exhibit the flabby and pulpy state of minds which suffered such a tissue of absurdities to make any impression at all upon them. I shall therefore examine very briefly the rest of Consul Holmes's 'evidence to the contrary.' It consists of four points.

1. About a fortnight after Dr. Liddon and myself saw the impalement, an English traveller passed from Servia 'along the Turkish frontier of the Drina from the Save to Svornik, and neither in Servia nor in Turkey did he hear a word of any impalements.' This is like saying that a costermonger could not be knocked down by a passing cab in the Seven Dials without a tourist from Scotland, travelling along the banks of the Tweed, having heard of it. As the crow flies, the frontier of

the Drina is about a hundred miles from where we saw the impalement ; but as regards facilities for the circulation of news, the distance is greater than that between London and Moscow. Moreover, the impalement of a Christian insurgent would certainly make no more impression on a Turkish population than a cab accident to a costermonger in the streets of London would make on the population of England. Yet so potent are Consul Holmes's prejudices in favour of Turkey that, though he has lived in that country for thirty years, his virgin simplicity is still so perfect that he thinks it quite impossible that an obscure Christian insurgent could have been impaled by Turkish soldiers on a lonely spot on a mountain side in Bosnia without causing such a sensation that, within a fortnight, the Turkish population, a hundred miles away, would be certain to rush out, in a state of frantic excitement, to blab the news to any chance traveller that passed by in a language of which the traveller did not understand a syllable !

2. The absurdity of this argument having been exposed by Dr. Liddon and myself, what does Consul Holmes do next ? Does he admit his own mistake, and at the same time allow the possibility of Dr. Liddon's eyesight and my own being better evidence than the absurd conjectures evolved by himself out of his inner consciousness, as he sits musingly in his office at Bosna Serai ? Not a bit of it. 'I had imagined,' says Consul Holmes, writing from Bosna Serai two days before the festival of Guy Fawkes, 'that Canon Liddon and Mr. MacColl would have been convinced long ere this that their statements regarding the impalement of the Christian insurgents in Bosnia were not founded on facts, and that their credulity had been grossly imposed

on. I have, however, just received all the correspondence on the subject lately published in the *Times*, and to my profound astonishment I see that Mr. MacColl, in a letter from Paris of October 4, not only persists in the veracity of his statement, but adduces the evidence of Bishop Strossmayer, who "said it was all quite true, with this addition, that women as well as men were impaled."

Now this is delicious. Not only do I 'persist' in preferring the evidence of my own eyesight to the wild imaginings of Consul Holmes, but I pay him the compliment of treating his absurdities with gravity, and even condescend to confirm my own evidence with the testimony of an eminent man of European reputation. Her Majesty's Consul cannot understand it at all. He is afflicted with 'profound astonishment,' and goes off again to consult 'his colleagues,' the Austrian and French Consuls, 'on the subject;' and the outcome of this conclave is that 'all have agreed that such cruelties could not have occurred without our having heard of them.' Still there are Dr. Liddon and Mr. MacColl, and behind them the famous Bishop Strossmayer, all declaring that the cruelties in question did actually take place. What is to be done? One thing is perfectly plain: the infallibility of the Consular omniscience must be maintained. What would be the use of holding her Gracious Majesty's *exequatur* if the ignorance of Consul Holmes did not counterbalance the positive knowledge of three presumably credible witnesses not similarly endowed. Marvellous is the influence on the official mind of this connection, however distant, with 'the Powers that be.' I have heard of a Scotch judge who had to sentence a man to death for fatally stabbing a soldier in a drunken brawl, and who

introduced his sentence with this preface : ‘Prisoner at the bar,’ said the judge, in his broadest Doric, ‘ye hāve been foon’ guilty of murdering a fellow-crittur, a soldier in the airmy. Ye knock-ed him doon, sir, and stamp-ed upon him, and prodded him till he was deed ; and, aboon a’, sir, ye ripp-ed up his breeks, which was his Mawjesty’s.’

The infallibility of Consular knowledge being thus an axiom in the case, the next thing was to account for the hallucination of Dr. Liddon and myself. This the Consular conclave did by suggesting ‘that the reverend travellers, . . . unable to distinguish truth from fiction, or the motives with which lies are told, had been the victims of a monstrous joke.’ (Blue Book No. 1, p. 648.) This suggestion is not particularly complimentary to the intellect of either Dr. Liddon or myself ; but I am sure that the Consular triumvirate at Bosna Serai did not mean to be rude. They were simply in a quandary. It being *à priori* impossible that an impalement could have taken place anywhere in Bosnia without being immediately discovered by one of the three Argus eyed Consuls at Bosna Serai, the question naturally resolved itself into a deliberate falsehood on the part of Dr. Liddon and myself, or ‘a monstrous joke,’ of which we had been made ‘victims.’

The conclave of Consuls accordingly breaks up, and Consul Holmes retires into the secret chamber of his inner consciousness in order to evolve a basis for the ‘monstrous joke.’ His mental labours are at last crowned with success, and here is the wondrous progeny :—

‘After much reflection,’ says Mr. Consul Holmes, ‘the matter is, I think, as clear as possible. Near most Bosnian farmhouses there are stakes such as Mr. Mac-

Coll describes, around which the haricot beans are fixed up to dry, with something above them to keep off the birds. At the time of Mr. MacColl's voyage down the Save it is probable that most of the beans had been garnered, but a portion might have been left on one of the stakes which attracted his attention. This, on being pointed out to some practical joker among the officers of the steamboat, with its accidental likeness to a body, together, perhaps, with the previous conversation of the travellers, suggested the hoax, which, on seeing that it was seriously accepted, was kept up till the end of the journey.'

But I had taken particular pains to explain that the stake in question was near no 'Bosnian farmhouse' or farm, or cultivated land of any kind; that it was a few yards in front of a Turkish military blockhouse, on the lonely side of a wooded hill, with a patch of wood, still lying on the ground, cut down to prevent a surprise. Whence the 'haricot beans' could come, or what they could have been doing there, Mr. Holmes does not explain. He asks us to accept it as an established fact purely and absolutely on the strength of its being evolved out of his own imagination 'after much reflection.' And so with the 'practical joker amongst the officers of the steamboat.' He, too, with his 'previous conversation' and 'suggested hoax,' is a creation of the Consular imagination, 'after much reflection.'

Having thus, after protracted labour, safely delivered himself of his bundle of haricot beans, our imaginative Consul proceeds:—

'All the subsequent confirmation of Bishop Strossmayer or others I take to have been the result of misunderstanding and preconceived conviction.'

Mark the stolid coolness of this assumption! I am

convinced that Consul Holmes did not mean to say anything offensive, despite the singularity of his observations. He simply was quite unable to believe that it could have fallen to the lot of a couple of English travellers to discover a fact of which Consul Holmes had not heard 'for twenty years.' 'Nothing but the most ample proof,' he says, 'will convince me of the truth of these gentlemen's statements. Impalement was, thirty or forty years ago, a very common mode of execution; but for the last twenty years, not even in the wilds of Mesopotamia, much less in Europe, have I ever heard of a single instance of this old barbarous custom.' And the gentleman who makes this candid confession of ignorance, in the face of facts which are perfectly familiar to all the rest of the world, is paid 700*l.* a year for supplying her Majesty's Government with trustworthy information! If Consul Holmes had been describing the manners and customs of some tribe in the remote interior of Africa, he could not have displayed grosser ignorance than he has shown in respect to events which, according to the evidence of Consul Freeman, 'are of almost daily occurrence' in Bosnia.

But I am anxious not to do Mr. Holmes an injustice, and I must therefore hasten to lay before my readers his two remaining arguments against the possibility of impalements in Bosnia.

3. 'In the flat country along the Save single stakes are adopted as means of obtaining an extended view of the country around.' Mr. Consul Holmes accordingly suggests that 'what Canon Liddon and Mr. MacColl really saw' was 'a watchman who had mounted on his stake, probably to look at the steamer descending the Save.'

How is it possible to confute such a controversialist as Consul Holmes? No sooner do you expose the absurdity of one argument than he immediately entrenches himself behind another equally absurd. The haricot beans have gone after the mythical crowds of Turks, who are supposed likely to rush out from all their villages to tell an English traveller the awful tale of a despised and hated Giaour being cruelly impaled by a company of True Believers. And now, instead of mythical Turks and mythical haricot beans, we have a mythical 'watchman,' climbing up a mythical stake, with his hands behind his back, in order to look at a steamer passing sixty yards below him, and which therefore he could see, with much more comfort to himself, quietly sitting on the ground. I have carefully explained that the impalement in question was on the side of a mountain, far away from cultivated fields. But that did not square with Consul Holmes's theory of a watchman guarding crops in a flat country. So, 'after much reflection,' he coolly assumes, and then publicly asserts, that the spot where we saw the impalement was so flat that a steamer passing down the river could not have been seen except from the top of a stake. And for all this Consul Holmes does not offer a morsel of evidence except the ludicrous surmises of a crude imagination. And not only so, but Consul Holmes becomes indignant because Dr. Liddon and myself prefer the evidence of our own positive knowledge to the puerilities of his confessed ignorance. Here is a specimen of the chastisement which we have had to endure from the Catonic ire of our Consular censor:—

'Canon Liddon remarks that "Mr. Holmes characterises our statement as astounding." I did so because it was "astounding" that these gentlemen could

have believed that it was reserved for them alone to discover, on a quiet European highway, what could not have possibly occurred without the widest publicity; astounding from the credulity displayed; astounding from the tenacity with which these cruelties have been insisted on, and almost irresistible evidence to the contrary disregarded.'

Really, this is enough to take away one's breath. Consul Holmes clearly has not a shadow of suspicion that what he is pleased to call 'almost irresistible evidence' would not be so much as listened to in any court of justice out of Turkey. It is, in fact, no evidence at all of anything beyond Consul Holmes's extreme simplicity. I suppose the explanation is that Consul Holmes has been so long accustomed to Turkish notions of justice that he has not been able to retain even a shadowy remembrance of what we mean by evidence in this country. However, after this outburst of indignation, it seems to have occurred to him that it would be well to try something more plausible than the 'haricot beans' and the 'watchman;' and so he gives us the following:—'I then [*i. e.* three months after the same journey by Dr. Liddon and myself] travelled down the Save in a steamer which during the past year has performed alternate voyages with the boat on which Canon Liddon travelled. I related to the captain and officers what had been stated by that gentleman. The story was received with a general laugh, and declared to have been undoubtedly a joke on the part of the officers of the steamer, which they had expected would have been received as it was intended, but which, on its being taken seriously, they had not ventured to explain.'

The captains of these Save steamers must, accord-

ing to Consul Holmes, be men of singularly exuberant humour. They appear to employ all their leisure time in playing practical jokes on their passengers; and this practical joking invariably takes the form of pointing out something or other which they declare to be an impaled insurgent. I wonder that it did not occur to Mr. Holmes to ask himself, 'after much reflection,' why the minds of these officers should always be running on the subject of impalements. It is a psychological phenomenon requiring explanation. Mortals not fitted with the inventive faculties of Consul Holmes would be apt to conclude that men whose minds were so perpetually haunted with visions of impaled Christians, that they sought relief in practical jokes on the subject, must have had some very painful experience of what had so powerfully affected them. This, however, is Mr. Consul Holmes's experience, not mine. If we are to believe him, the Austrian skippers and officers, who traverse the Save, go up and down the decks of their steamers button-holing their passengers, like the Ancient Mariner, and pointing out in brake and dell the imaginary forms of impaled insurgents. That appears to be Consul Holmes's experience. Mine is commonplace in comparison. The captain and officers, on whose steamer I spent two days and a night, seemed to me to be very ordinary persons, one might even say prosaic; minding their own business, and not speaking to the passengers except in answer to questions. I observed no indication of that grim humour and propensity to practical joking of a ghastly nature to which, on the evidence of Consul Holmes, they are so abnormally addicted. But then I relied only on the testimony of my eyes and ears, and not on the improvised evidence of an undisciplined imagination.

As to the negative evidence of the captain and officers of the 'alternate' steamer to that on which Dr. Liddon and myself travelled, it is worth nothing: first, because it *is* negative; secondly, because no other evidence could have been expected under the circumstances, even if the officers in question had seen a hundred impalements. Here were the Austrian Consul-General, the English Consul-General, and the French Consul moving heaven and earth to prove that no impalements had taken place in Turkey—'even in the wilds of Mesopotomia'—for twenty years; and we are asked to believe that the Austrian officers of a river steamer would incur what would seem to them the unknown danger of giving evidence in a contrary sense. If the officers on board the other steamer had blabbed imprudently about matters which did not concern them, all the more reason why the officers whom the British Consul cross-examined would take care to keep out of the scrape by giving no evidence of an unpalatable description. Anyone who has been much abroad—and to no country is the observation more applicable than to bureaucratic Austria—must know that the first instinct of a witness, when he finds himself examined by the authorities, is, not to tell the truth, but to avoid compromising himself. Consequently, I should not have been in the least surprised if Consul Holmes had actually produced affidavits, from the very persons on board the Austrian steamer who told us that they had witnessed impalements, positively denying that they had ever said so.

I have now gone through the whole of Consul Holmes's 'almost irresistible evidence,' and it will be observed that on every point, on which it has been possible to test it, it is contradicted by patent facts.

Impalements could not have taken place in Bosnia, says Mr. Consul Holmes, without the Slave papers making some reference to the subject. This argument assumes that Consul Holmes is a Slavonic scholar, and that he is in the habit of reading *all* the Slave newspapers so diligently that no reference to impalements could have been published in any of them and escape his detection. I am sorry to ruffle Consul Holmes's complacent opinion of himself, but the fact is that the Slave newspapers made mention, not of one impalement, but of many; and not only so, but the German press of Vienna denounced those atrocities with such vigour that the Turkish authorities, themselves being witness, 'were forced to inquire into it.'

No impalement could have taken place on the Turkish side of the Save, says Mr. Consul Holmes, without the Slaves on the Austrian side of the river making an outcry about it; and no such outcry could have been made without Consul Holmes and his Austrian colleague hearing of it. But an impalement did take place on the Turkish side of the Save, which caused a great outcry among the villagers on the opposite bank; the victim was on his stake for days; the Vienna papers were full of it; the sound of the outcry reached even so far as Constantinople; a Consul under the jurisdiction of Mr. Holmes duly reported it. Yet no whisper of all this ever vibrated on the tympanum of either of Consul Holmes's ears.

No Consul of any nationality at Bosna Seraï, says Consul Holmes, nor any of the Turkish authorities, ever heard of a single case of impalement. Yet Consul Freeman, writing from Bosna Seraï, declares that such atrocities were 'of almost daily occurrence;' and he gives a detailed account of a specific impale-

ment which the Turkish authorities admit that they 'were forced to inquire into.'

Consul Holmes never heard of a case of impalement either in European or Asiatic Turkey for twenty years; therefore none such took place in Bosnia last year. Both allegations are in the teeth of facts.

Behold Mr. Holmes's 'almost irresistible evidence'! and pity the 'astounding credulity' of Dr. Liddon and myself for presumptuously believing that it was not of a sufficiently cogent character to invalidate the evidence of our own eyesight, backed as that was by the testimony of other eye-witnesses whose character Bishop Strossmayer on the one hand, and Dr. Sandwith and Miss Irby on the other, have declared to be 'unimpeachable.'

I have gone at this length into the question of Turkish impalements, not for the purpose of vindicating Dr. Liddon and myself against the amusing freaks of Consul Holmes's distempered imagination, but in order to illustrate and accentuate the pachydermatous condition of some minds among us in relation to Turkey. Evidence which, on other questions, they would admit to be demonstrative and irrefragable, rebound against the thick hide of their prejudices, like pellets from a pea-shooter against the sides of a rhinoceros. I find, for example, in the *Standard* of March 1, a full report of a speech delivered by the Under Secretary for the Colonies at Southsea on the previous evening. He had occasion to refer to the Eastern Question, and here is a posy out of the flowers of rhetoric with which his discourse is strewed:—

'Some persons are so far carried away by their sympathy for the idolatrous form of so-called Christianity which prevails in the East, as to be incapable of

distinguishing one object from another. For instance, we find an eminent divine who was unable, so great was the dimness which came over his vision in consequence of his feelings, to distinguish between a Christian martyr and a faggot of beans (laughter). It used to be held as a test of education if anyone knew how many beans made five ; but that, I think, must now be amended to how many beans make a Christian martyr (laughter). Many persons who lost their heads over this subject claim to be patriots.'

I believe the world has yet to learn Mr. Lowther's qualifications for discoursing *ex cathedrâ* on theological questions. Nor shall I discuss with him whether 'some persons were so far carried away by their sympathy for the idolatrous form of so-called Christianity which prevails in the East as to be incapable of distinguishing one object from another.' It is more to the point to remind Mr. Lowther that 'some persons are so far carried away by their sympathy for the idolatrous form' of sundry superstitions in the West 'as to be incapable of distinguishing one object from another.' 'There are four classes of Idols,' says a writer of whom Mr. Lowther may possibly have heard in the intervals of his theological studies, 'which beset men's minds ; namely, the Idols of the Tribe, the Idols of the Cave, the Idols of the Market-Place, and the Idols of the Theatre. The Idols of the Cave are idols of the individual man. For every one (besides the errors common to human nature in general) has a cave or den of his own, which refracts or discolours the light of nature.'¹ If Mr. Lowther should ever be so fortunate as to break his idols and emerge from his den into the light of day, he may possibly learn in time to

¹ Novum Organum. Aphorism xlii.

‘distinguish one object from another.’ It was long after the recovery of his eyesight before Dr. Chesselden’s patient could ‘distinguish one object from another.’ He could not distinguish the cat from the dog without feeling them, and was surprised that others could tell the difference by sight alone. Even so Mr. Lowther cannot now, for the life of him, understand how ‘an eminent divine’ could tell the difference between ‘a Christian martyr and a faggot of beans’ without touching them. And so he proceeds, like Consul Holmes, to evolve out of his own imagination an explanation of the riddle which has puzzled him. Both the Consul and the Under Secretary are evidently quite sincere; but each ‘has a cave or den of his own, which refracts and discolours the light of nature.’ And this it is which makes the controversy on the Eastern Question so disheartening. If the Russophobists would only issue forth into the light of day and see the relative distances and proportions of things, their eyes would soon learn to ‘distinguish one object from another,’ British interests from British prejudices. But they remain blinking away in their dens, and resent as a personal affront every ray of light from the outer world that penetrates the darkness of their cells. If Dr. Liddon and myself had made the banks of the Neva instead of the Save the scene of the impalement which we witnessed, they would have accepted it without further inquiry. In other words, where strong evidence would have been necessary they would have required none; where weak evidence ought not to have been rejected they refused to accept evidence which was demonstrative and overwhelming. Two English clergymen, one of them of more than English reputation, and both being presumably in possession of

their senses and mental faculties, declare that, on a sunny day and in a singularly clear atmosphere, they saw, both with the naked eye and through good field-glasses, a human body on a stake within a distance of not more than a hundred yards. The thing itself was probable. Impalement, to borrow the phrase of Mr. Gladstone, is 'one of the venerated institutions' of the Turk. He has always practised it. He has never put down an insurrection without practising it. Official reports, published by the British Government, had proved that adults and children had been impaled last year in Bulgaria, in Servia, and in Bosnia. Bishop Strossmayer, a prelate and statesman of European reputation, had declared publicly that persons of both sexes had been impaled in the neighbourhood of the spot which is the scene of the controversy. Yet all this mass of evidence is rejected scornfully, as something which merits only ridicule and contempt, because a British Consul, who, forsooth, has never heard of an impalement in Turkey—'not even in the wilds of Mesopotamia'—'for twenty years,' conjectures, as he sits at ease at Serajevo, that what Dr. Liddon and myself saw was 'a faggot of beans.' And, with all the facts fresh in his mind, an Under Secretary of State accepts the 'faggot-of-beans' theory, and thinks that 'an eminent divine' was 'unable,' through 'idolatrous sympathies,' 'to distinguish one object from another.' It may be urged, by way of explanation, that this was said in an after-dinner speech, when orators are occasionally known to find it hard 'to distinguish one object from another.' But the explanation is inadmissible; for Mr. Lowther has not the reputation of being 'ebrius ac petulans,'¹ even after dinner. No: it is clearly

¹ Juv. Sat. iii. 278.

a case of intellectual dipsomania, and Mr. Lowther is only one of many victims who have succumbed to the inebriating draught.

Per contra: look at the Gromof story. It is related by a Russian sutler of whom we know absolutely nothing, and tells of deeds which the chief Law Officer of the Crown, with the exaggeration of a mind inflamed by 'the oppressor's wrong,' characterises as 'barbarities' differing only from those of Batak in the fact of being rather 'more cold-blooded.' Yet this story is accepted without a word of inquiry, and made the text of numberless inflammatory speeches and articles against Russia.

'Look here, upon this picture, and on this,' and answer, who are the credulous?

The extraordinary credulity in respect to the Bulgarian atrocities which closed the minds of the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, and the British Ambassador at Constantinople, is too fresh in the minds of the public to need any detailed exposition. But the same attitude of scepticism is still visible in Ministerial circles, and it may therefore be useful to recall two or three leading incidents of what is already ancient history, politically considered, though only separated from us by a few months in point of time. Here is Lord Beaconsfield's first account of the Bulgarian atrocities in reply to a question addressed to him in the House of Commons, on June 26, 1876, by Mr. Forster, in reference to a communication from its Special Correspondent in the *Daily News* of the previous Friday :¹—

'SIR,—We have no information in our possession

¹ Hansard, vol. ccxxx. p. 235.

which justifies the statements to which the Right Honourable gentleman refers. Some time ago, when troubles just commenced in Bulgaria, they appear to have begun by strangers entering the country and burning the villages without reference to religion or race. The Turkish Government at that time had no regular troops in Bulgaria, and the inhabitants, of course, were obliged to defend themselves. The persons who are called Bashi-Bazouks and Circassians are persons who had settled in the country and had a stake in it. I have not the slightest doubt myself that the war, if you can call it a war, between the invaders and the Bashi-Bazouks and Carcassians was carried on with great ferocity. One can easily understand, under the circumstances under which these atrocities occurred, and with such populations, that that might happen. I am told that no quarter was given, and no doubt scenes took place which we must all entirely deplore. But in the month of May the attention of Sir Henry Elliot was called to this state of things from some information which reached him, and he immediately communicated with the Porte, who at once ordered some Regular troops to repair to Bulgaria, and steps to be taken by which the action of the Bashi-Bazouks and Circassians might be arrested. That is all the information I have to give the Right Honourable gentleman on the subject, and I will merely repeat that the information which we have at various times received does not justify the statements made in the journal (*Daily News*) which he has named.'

As the evidence in confirmation of the atrocities increased, so did Mr. Disraeli's confidence in the pastoral simplicity and lamb-like character of the Circassians, and in the good faith of the Turkish Government.

Here is his description of both in the House of Commons on July 18 of last year :—

‘ These lands were in consequence portioned out to them in various parts of Turkey. These men have lived peaceably for twenty years. Their conduct has been satisfactory, and there has been no imputation on them of savage or turbulent behaviour. They have cultivated farms and built villages, and during the whole period I think there has been no complaint of these men. But we know, of course, what Eastern populations are, and the Circassians are ‘ a very courageous and an armed population. Therefore, if their villages were burnt and their farms ravaged, it need not be a matter of surprise that they should take matters into their own hands and endeavour to defend themselves. In consequence of the state of affairs there—a guerilla war, local vengeance, and personal passions—there is no doubt that towards the end of May and so on scenes occurred of a description from which, with our feelings, we naturally recoil. But all this time our Consuls—and the House will soon have ample evidence of the fact—were in communication with the Ambassador, and the Ambassador was—I will not say remonstrating constantly with the Turkish Government, for the Turkish Government were most anxious to be guided by the advice of the British Ambassador—but he was using his influence with the Turkish Government to prevent, as much as he possibly could, these distressing scenes. The Grand Vizier said to our Ambassador that “ it was impossible to add to the stringency of the instructions he had sent to put an end to the disorders, and to disarm these Circassians by force if necessary, but he noticed the omission of all mention of the horrors practised on the Mussulmans

by those who had attempted to get up the insurrection." There is no doubt that acts on both sides, as necessarily would be the case under such circumstances, were equally terrible and atrocious.'

Now precisely three weeks before this, Mr. Disraeli had in his possession the following information, in a despatch from Consul Reade, dated 'Rustchuk, June 16, 1876.' 'In several of my reports to your Excellency' (Sir H. Elliot) 'during the past three months,' says Consul Reade, 'I had the honour to bring to your knowledge the alleged conduct of the Circassians in the Vilayet. I, at the same time, spoke to the Governor-General here unofficially on the subject, and his Excellency made such statements that I entertained some hope that a check would be put to the sinister proceedings of these people, which was and still is the principal topic of conversation throughout the Vilayet. From what has reached me, however, from reliable quarters, it appears that these people are committing atrocities, chiefly amongst the villages near the Balkans, which keep the whole of that quarter in a state of the greatest terror. Not relying on Christian information, I endeavoured to ascertain from Mussulmans whether or not the reports brought here on the subject were true.'

Arming himself with this evidence, Consul Reade went to the Governor-General of Bulgaria and laid it before him. 'His Excellency said that, although the Circassians had certainly committed acts of violence, still what I heard was exaggerated. This has always been his reply on these occasions.' The French Consul also had collected evidence 'which,' says Consul Reade, 'agrees a good deal with what I am relating. It is even actually said here that these Circassians

are kidnapping children of Bulgarians killed in the late affairs. From what I can make out, I am really inclined to think that the object at this moment, in the lately disturbed district of Tirnova, is to diminish the number of Bulgarians as much as possible; for it is said that the Circassians seem to be doing all this with the apparent connivance of the authorities. I yesterday perused a letter from the wife of a missionary at Tultcha, giving an account of similar proceedings on the part of the Circassians in that neighbourhood, and relating how the German Colonists there were suffering therefrom.'

The evidence which Consul Reade sent both to Sir H. Elliot and Lord Derby—to the former on the 16th of June, to the latter two days later—was taken down by a 'trustworthy' agent of the Consul's from the lips of a Mussulman who took part in the massacres, and who was relating what he had seen to a company of Mussulmans, one of them being a bimbashi or major. 'When I tell you,' said this eye-witness, 'that even our schoolboys killed their five or six Bulgarians, what can you imagine that I did?' 'He praised the Circassians as having done great things, having as their motto, "Let the Giaour die: strike him; let him perish."' 'The bimbashi asked him if they had taken any rifles from those that were killed. He replied "that they had not even a hoe with them, much less rifles." 'The bimbashi then said that they must have killed innocent people. He replied, "Yes; very, very few had arms." Another present remarked that 5,000 or 6,000 must have perished innocently. He answered, "If you had said 25,000, or 26,000, you would have been more correct." He added, "It is a great loss to the country, as most of them were tax-paying people."' ¹

¹ Parliamentary Papers of 1876, No. 3, pp. 333-4.

All this, I repeat, on the evidence of the Blue Book, Lord Beaconsfield had in his possession three weeks before he made the statement which I have quoted above. Yet he still persisted, in the teeth of a further accumulation of evidence, in giving testimonials of good character to the Circassians and the Turkish Government. On the 24th of July Lord Derby received the following laconic despatch from the British Ambassador at Berlin :—

‘Berlin, July 20, 1876. My Lord,—I regret to say that the information received by the German Government confirms the reports respecting the atrocities committed by the Turks in Bulgaria.’¹

On the 29th of July another despatch from Consul Reade was in the hands of Lord Derby, containing the following information :—

‘I have just heard the affair of Chefket Pasha, at Boyadjik, on the other side of the Balkans, as related by a Prussian engineer in the Government service here, who was close to the spot when it took place, and whose statement almost entirely agrees with that given in the *Daily News* of the 8th instant. This officer, knowing the real facts of the case, says he never was so thunderstruck as when he heard that Chefket Pasha had been decorated and promoted. He further says he saw the Commissioner sent afterwards by the Porte to investigate the matter, who said to him that the whole of the villagers had not been massacred, but only 700 (out of 1,300.) The Commissioner said very little else, and appeared extremely pensive, which the engineer said he did not wonder at, from what he had found.

‘After this the engineer returned to Shumla in com-

¹ Parliamentary Papers of 1876, No. 3, p. 6.

pany with a high Ottoman functionary whom he did not wish to name, and who on the way and in his presence asked the zaptiehs who accompanied them if they had profited by the rising to diminish the number of Bulgarians. They replied not, as in their district everything had been quite quiet. He then said, "You ought to have done so, and you would have rendered a service to the Government."

'I have given your Excellency [Sir H. Elliot] this, having heard it from an impartial person, and who, if anything, would rather be in favour of the Porte, by whom he is employed.'¹

Here, then, is strong confirmation, if it needed any, of the report sent by Consul Reade to Lord Derby on the 16th of June. The British Ambassador at Berlin confirms it substantially on the authority of the German Government, and a Prussian engineer in the service of the Turkish Government confirms it personally to Consul Reade himself. All this evidence was in possession of Lord Derby before the end of July, and on the 31st evening of that month the Prime Minister held up Consul Reade's evidence to the ridicule of the House of Commons, by denouncing it as 'coffee-house babble.' Yet Lord Beaconsfield has declared that he was ill-served on that occasion—not, however, as he is careful to add, by Sir Henry Elliot. 'We should have better communication at present,' he said in the House of Commons on the evening of August 11, 'if unfortunately, some years back, there had not been a Liberal assault on the Consular system, which reduced the number of Turkish vice-consuls.' This explanation was repeated with great success in different parts of the country, and Lord Beaconsfield himself repeated it in

¹ Parliamentary Papers of 1876, No. 3, p. 18.

the House of Lords on the 20th of last February. Yet it now turns out to have been as mythical as some other statements made on the authority of Lord Beaconsfield's 'historical conscience.' The Government was not ill, but well served by its consular agents in Bulgaria, and as far as there is any ground of complaint—and there is very much—on that score, the whole burden of it must be borne by the very gentleman whom Lord Beaconsfield specially exonerates from blame—Sir Henry Elliot—as I shall now very briefly prove. But let me say parenthetically, that a Premier can hardly expect to be diligently served by Consuls if he publicly denounces the well-authenticated evidence which they send him as 'coffee-house babble.' Consuls would be more than human if they continued to supply the Government with evidence which the Premier and Foreign Secretary showed but too plainly that they would rather not have. Her Majesty's Consul in the Herzegovina supplied the Foreign Office with accurate information respecting the insurrection till he was cavalierly told 'not to bother the Foreign Office with his despatches.' This has lately been published in the *Spectator*, on Consul Moore's own authority, though Consul Holmes thinks it an 'insult' to suggest the possibility of Consuls ever 'writing to order.' I have had occasion to read a good many Blue Books of late, and in one of them I find a circular despatch from a British ambassador at Constantinople instructing the Consuls, under the stimulus of a menace, how they are to report. One of the Consuls answered the list of ambassadorial questions before the letter of instructions reached him, and a most terrible account he gives of Turkish misrule. Within a few days he received, to his undisguised terror, the circular which directed him

how he was to answer. So, without hesitation, he wrote a second despatch according to the tenour of his instructions, in which he gives quite a different account of the state of things, and offers an abject apology to the Ambassador for having dared to tell the truth in his previous despatch. By one of those 'accidents,' which allowed the casual reference to impalements in Bosnia to get into the last Blue Book, the two contradictory despatches of this unfortunate Consul were published together, and they are at this moment lying before me.¹

An additional confirmation of the pressure brought to bear upon our Consuls in Turkey is supplied in one of Lord Salisbury's frank despatches to Lord Derby from Constantinople. (Blue Book No. 2, p. 50.) In one of the sittings of the Preliminary Conference General Ignatieff, 'dwelling upon the prevalence of insecurity and danger of massacre, stated the inexorable determination of his Government to have some sufficient material force as security for Christians during the introduction of the reforms, and for the Commission itself.' 'We stated,' says Lord Salisbury, 'that our Consuls did not believe in the danger; whereupon the Ambassadors of each of the four other Powers stated that the reports from their Consuls were in the opposite sense.'

It is greatly to the credit of our Consuls in Turkey that, with very few exceptions, they have, so far as I can judge from their despatches, told the truth and risked the consequences. The great culprits are the

¹ The Ambassador was Sir Henry Bulwer. The Sultan rewarded him with a handsome yacht and an island. What became of the yacht I know not. But the British Ambassador sold the island to the Khedive for a good round sum of money.

Foreign Office and the British Embassy at Constantinople. I have shown how the English public were served by the Foreign Office and the Premier; but I am bound to add that the Foreign Office and the Premier were most scandalously served by Sir Henry Elliot. The crowning atrocity in Bulgaria was that of Batak, and that took place on the 9th of May. Yet on the 25th of July Sir Henry Elliot writes as follows to Lord Derby:—

‘I have reason to believe that the credulity of the correspondent of the *Daily News*, whose letter on the subject of the Bulgarian atrocities attracted so much attention in England, has been imposed upon by two Bulgarians, relatives of one of the presumed ringleaders of the revolt, inhabiting Philippopoli. One of them was for a time editor of a Bulgarian journal printed at Constantinople, and it is evident that information derived from such a source can only be regarded as untrustworthy,’¹ Accordingly Sir Henry Elliot counteracts the ‘untrustworthy’ information of the *Daily News* by sending a copy of a Constantinopolitan newspaper, ‘containing some interesting details as to the origin of the late Bulgarian insurrection, *and to some extent justifying the severe measures which attended its suppression.*’ A month before this, let it be observed, Sir Henry Elliot had the first of Consul Reade’s despatches giving a report of the Bulgarian atrocities from an eye-witness. He had also Consul Reade’s second despatch before him, reporting, from a Prussian eye-witness, the destruction of Boyadjik. Nor was this all. A letter from Constantinople, signed ‘A Constantinopolitan,’ was published in the *Times* of October 18; and the writer of the letter says, ‘I have the most positive

¹ Parliamentary Papers of 1876, No. 5, p. 19.

and undeniable proofs, which even Sir Henry will not dare deny, that twelve days after the destruction of Boyadjik, Sir Henry Elliot received an account of its destruction almost literally corresponding to that given by Mr. Baring; and I am happy to state that the information was derived neither from Bulgarian nor Russian sources, but from a highly respectable and trustworthy Turk. Yet Sir Henry entirely disbelieved this information, and credited "what he has been told at the Porte;" and, while he is very careful in his despatches to tell Lord Derby of the information he had received from persons who disbelieved the atrocities, yet he does not say even a word in regard to the account of the destruction of Boyadjik.'

There is a slight error in the last sentence of this quotation. It appears from the last Blue Books that Sir Henry Elliot does say 'a word in regard to the destruction of Boyadjik.' In a despatch, dated 'July 23,' Sir Henry tells Lord Derby that he 'had a further conversation with the Grand Vizier upon the excesses of the Bashi-Bazouks in Bulgaria.' 'His Highness having, however, alluded to the case of Boyajikeui [another way of spelling Boyadjik] as having been possibly misrepresented by the newspapers, I read to him that portion of Mr. Reade's despatch of the 19th instant, in which he states that the account given in the *Daily News* of the 8th instant had been corroborated to him by a credible eye-witness, except that the latter put the number of victims at 700 instead of 1,300, as given in the newspaper.' The Grand Vizier replied, after the manner of Grand Viziers, 'that only seventy persons out of the village were missing, many of whom were certainly not killed and would reappear.'

Now let the reader bear in mind how the facts

stand at this stage. About the 20th of June Sir Henry Elliot had received a despatch from Consul Reade, giving what has turned out to be a literally correct report of the Bulgarian atrocities generally, and this on the unsuspected testimony of a Turk who took part in them. The account, moreover, was confirmed substantially by the information gathered independently by the French colleague of Consul Reade. Consul Reade's second despatch reached Sir Henry Elliot before the 23rd of July, and in this despatch he had an account of the destruction of Boyadjik on the evidence of a Prussian engineer in the service of the Porte, and 'who was close to the spot when it took place;' also the evidence of 'the Commissioner sent afterwards by the Porte to investigate the matter,' who admitted that out of 1,300 inhabitants, 700 had been massacred.

This would seem to be tolerably good evidence; but there is stronger yet to come. In Blue Book No. 1 (1877), p. 116, the reader will find a despatch from Vice-Consul Brophy to Sir Henry Elliot, dated 'Bourgas, June 14, 1876.' In that despatch Vice-Consul Brophy gives a full account of the destruction of Boyadjik. Let one extract suffice. 'The inhabitants of Boyadjik refused to give up their arms to the Bashi-Bazouks, but offered to give them up to the authorities of their own districts.' 'Upon this,' says Vice-Consul Brophy, 'being telegraphed to Slimnia, Chefket Pasha, commanding the troops there, was sent to Boyadjik with a large force of Bashi-Bazouks and some artillerymen. When he arrived on the spot the chief men of the village went out to meet him, and threw themselves at his feet, protesting that they had no bad feeling against the Government, and that they had assembled only to protect themselves, their families, and their

property against the attacks of Circassians and Bashi-Bazouks. Chefket Pasha then asked if they would give up their arms, and the deputation replied in the affirmative, saying that they would return to the village and collect them. They went back with this intention; but as soon as they were within the village the order to storm it was given by Chefket Pasha, and a general massacre commenced, the Bulgarians offering no resistance, and allowing themselves—to use the words of a Mussulman who was present—to be slaughtered like sheep . . . Christian children were carried off by the Circassians, and are now slaves in the Circassian villages.’

Such was the mass of evidence as to Bulgarian atrocities in general, and the massacre of Boyadjik in particular, which Sir H. Elliot had in his possession when the Grand Vizier assured him that there was no massacre at all, ‘only seventy persons out of the village’ being ‘missing, many of whom were certainly not killed and would reappear.’ What answer did the British Ambassador make to what he knew to be a brazen lie? Did he show any resentment, any indignation, at this impudent contradiction of the trustworthy evidence of his own Consuls and Vice-Consuls? Far from it. Sir Henry’s resentment was all reserved, as the Blue Books too plainly show, for the outraged Christians. To every Turkish buffet he invariably turns the other cheek. And so on this occasion he flings all his own evidence overboard at the bidding of the Grand Vizier, and meekly goes his way. ‘Till I receive Mr. Baring’s report,’ he writes to Lord Derby, ‘I shall have no means of judging which of these accounts approaches nearest to the truth.’¹ ‘No means

¹ Blue Book No. 1 (1877), p. 9.

of judging' between the comparative value of a Grand Vizier's patent lies and the well-authenticated testimony of his own Consuls! And worse even than this remains behind. Vice-Consul Brophy's despatch, reporting the massacre of Boyadjik, and which bears the date of June 14, was kept snugly in Sir H. Elliot's desk at Constantinople till August 31. And meanwhile, with all this damning evidence in his possession, he was assuring the English public, through Lord Derby and Lord Beaconsfield, 'that the credulity of the correspondent of the *Daily News* . . . had been imposed upon by two Bulgarians,' and that it was 'evident that the information derived from such a source can only be regarded as untrustworthy.' I do not know how long it takes for a letter from Bourgas to reach Constantinople; but on July 22 Vice-Consul Brophy wrote a despatch to Sir H. Elliot, in which he says: 'I have heard lately even educated Turks, one a secretary of Chefket Pasha of Boyadjik celebrity, declare that the whole race of Bulgarians, innocent or guilty, ought to be exterminated.'¹

I fear the plain truth is that Sir H. Elliot did not wish to receive information which told against the Turks. In a despatch from Prince Gortchakoff to Count Schouvaloff in the beginning of last August occurs the following significant passage: 'The data it [Mr. Baring's Commission in Bulgaria] has collected entirely confirm the facts mentioned in the reports of our Agent, and which were always communicated by General Ignatiew to his colleagues, including the

¹ Blue Book No. 1 (1877), p. 10. Can this be the same Mr. Brophy who appears as joint author with Captain St. Clair on the title-page of the scandalous book on Bulgaria on which I have remarked in a previous chapter? If so, his name must surely have been taken in vain. His despatches are excellent.

English Ambassador.’¹ The Agent referred to by Prince Gortchakoff was Prince Tzeretelew, one of the secretaries at the Russian Embassy at Constantinople, but who was acting as Consul in Bulgaria all through the massacres. He kept his chief fully informed, and I know from another source, besides Prince Gortchakoff’s despatch, that the Russian Ambassador regularly communicated to Sir Henry Elliot the information which he received from Bulgaria through Prince Tzeretelew. Prince Tzeretelew was at Batak and other scenes of horror some time before Mr. Baring arrived in Bulgaria, and with him was a French journalist who has written a book² on the subject. I shall make one or two quotations for the benefit of Consul Holmes, but I shall leave them in the original:—

‘Cent vingt et un villages furent donc traités de la sorte : les femmes furent violées et les enfants coupés en morceaux. Les bachi-bouzoucks les prenaient par un jambe ou un bras, les coupaient d’un coup de leurs couteaux, et passaient à un autre ; les plus adroits les tranchaient en deux à la ceinture. Un prêtre me dit qu’il y a quelques jours, tandis qu’il traversait un gué, un de ces demi-cadavres vint heurter les jambes de son cheval. Ailleurs, un prêtre fut crucifié ; un autre rôti à la broche ; plus loin, *on empala des femmes sur des bouts d’arbustes arrachés aux haies.*’³

M. de Wœstyne tells a most affecting story of a number of children whose parents had been massacred, and whom the Bashi-Bazouks carried away, in order to sell them into slavery. Finding, however, that their

¹ Blue Book No. 1 (1877), p. 23.

² ‘Voyage au Pays des Bachi-Bouzoucks.’ The author’s name is De Wœstyne.

³ P. 228.

little captives, worn out by hunger and terror, could not keep up with them, they began to massacre them. A native Mussulman warned them that some of the children might be of foreign parentage, and they might get into trouble if they killed them. Thereupon the Bashi-Bazouks held a consultation, and then asked the children to say grace, which they did, crossing themselves as they said the words. The Greeks and Latins make the sign of the cross differently. Of this one of the Bashi-Bazouks was aware, and having communicated his knowledge to the rest of the band, they marked the children who made the sign of the cross in the Greek fashion, and thus proved themselves to be Bulgarian, and they, there and then, deliberately cut their throats. Now this is an atrocity of a totally different kind from any committed by Christian nations. It displays a love of cruelty for its own sake which is peculiar and abnormal. Other nations are cruel in hot blood. The Turk is most cruel when his blood is cool. The following story is another illustration. M. de Wœstyne had an escort of zaptiehs, and on passing a certain spot between Philippopoli and Perutchitza, one of the zaptiehs pointed it out as the place where they had massacred a number of Bulgarian prisoners whom they were escorting to Philippopoli. Some of them were only wounded, and these they buried alive with the corpses. ‘Ce souvenir fait beaucoup rire,’ says M. de Wœstyne, ‘un de mes zaptiés d’escorte.’¹ What a volume of information as to the relation of the two races is concentrated in that brutal laugh! And Lord Derby appears to think that homœopathic doses of mild advice, wrapped up in the sugared phrases of Sir Henry Elliot, will induce the Turks to deal justly with the

¹ P. 244.

Rayahs! It is probable that the zaptieh, who could not recall the burying alive of the wounded Christians with the corpses of their murdered comrades without an outburst of merriment at the fun of the thing, was not of an exceptionally brutal nature. To members of his own race and faith he may have been considerate and gentle, and possibly also to the foreign stranger who was not in his power. But the contortions of a wounded Rayah, feebly struggling against burial alive with corpses, were to him but as the play of the salmon to the sanguine angler: it was good sport. And humane and Christian England, out of regard to 'British interests,' will not hear of 'coercion' to stop this fiendish sport. And those who are daily witnesses of these things, and now and then rush forth at all hazards to rescue their fellow-Christians and kindred — gallant Serbia,¹ heroic Monte-

¹ The Servians have been most cruelly maligned—by Lord Derby among the rest. In his speech in the House of Lords on February 20, as reported in the *Times*, he said that 'the Servian army was almost entirely composed of Russian volunteers;' the inference of course being that alleged sympathy with their Christian brethren across their borders was a mere pretext to conceal ambitious schemes; and that even for these schemes the Servians had not the courage to fight, but allowed all the fighting to be done for them by Russian volunteers. We heard in this country of there being some 20,000 Russian volunteers in Serbia, and in the beginning of October there was a rumour of 4,000 mounted and fully equipped Russian Cossacks having appeared in Roumania, on their way to Serbia. Let me put down the result of my own observations and inquiries on the spot. My informants were English as well as Servians and Russians. The war was unquestionably forced upon the Prince and the Government by a popular movement, and against the advice of Russia. The standing army of Serbia did not number more than four thousand men. The rest consisted simply of a levy of the male population, who had hardly undergone any drill, and were mostly

negro — find themselves denounced by the Prime Minister of England in language in which he would probably hesitate to describe the last Fenian rising in Ireland.

Nor is it the Turks alone who are brutalised by their system of administration. It has a fatal tendency to blunt the natural sensitiveness even of Englishmen, who start with the notion that the Turk is 'a good fellow,' and shout 'British interests for ever!' These men really seem to have persuaded themselves that it is the Rayah's predestined lot, in the eternal fitness of things, to be trampled upon, tortured, and slain on behalf of Ottoman lusts and British interests; and whenever the down-trodden slave, goaded to despair, turns on his oppressor, they cry 'Hands off!' to all who would help him, and urge their friend the Turk to 'suppress' with all speed the 'ungrateful' rebels, who fail to appreciate the blessedness of Ottoman rule.

armed with old muskets which were as useless as walking-sticks against the long-range rifles of the Turks. Yet, notwithstanding their disadvantages, the Servian army did wonders. It held its own for months against the best soldiers of the Turkish Empire, who greatly outnumbered it. But its cowardice? I doubt whether English peasants would always show a bold front if they found themselves shot down at long ranges while their own weapons could not carry the third of the distance. The French are a brave nation, yet see how the Mobiles, from want of training, were invariably beaten and cowed by the Germans. But the 4,000 mounted Cossacks and the 20,000 Russian volunteers? Both myths: the former, literally; and as to the latter, General Tcherniaieff has lately declared 'that in the eleven days' fighting before Alexinatiz and in the battle of the 1st of September there were in all only a hundred Russian soldiers and officers; and that, at the close of the war, the whole number of Russians in an army of 28,000 men was 1,806 soldiers and 646 officers. This agrees substantially with what I learnt in Servia. What a brave and dashing soldier the Servian makes was proved by the

Therefore it was that my Lord Derby urged the Austrian Government to starve back upon the stakes and bayonets of the Turks the Christian refugees who had fled across the border for life and honour, and this while their piteous cry was sounding in his ears that 'they would sooner drown themselves in the Unna than again submit themselves to Turkish oppression.'¹ It was 'a petty local disturbance,' exclaims the Foreign Secretary. Admirable statesmanship! which fails to see that 'a petty local disturbance' may be as symptomatic of a general disease of the body politic as 'a petty local' discolouration of the tongue may be of the human frame. Lord Derby is probably as humane as other men in ordinary life, though I should be inclined to say, judging him from his public utterances alone, that his sympathies are at all times and on all subjects of the sluggish order. But it is evident that in his case 'distance' does *not* 'lend enchantment to the view.' Had he seen the outrages on the Rayahs perpetrated on the floor of the Foreign Office, it is possible he might have roused himself to an effort on behalf of humanity as well as for the sake of the furniture and the carpet. But the outrages took place in Bosnia, in the Herzegovina, in Bulgaria; and Lord Derby had not imagination enough to realise the true character of the reports which reached him. Had the suffering Christians been so many persons on a chess-board, and Lord Derby had a stake on the game, he could not have shown less feeling than he did during those weeks of agony, when he was urging the

corps of the brave and brilliant Horvatovitch, who often beat enemies far superior to himself in numbers, and was himself never beaten.

¹ See Consul Freeman's suppressed Despatch.

Turks to 'suppress' the rebels, and the Austrian Government to starve them into submission.

Sir Henry Elliot is another example of the same deadening influence of contact with the Turks on minds of a narrow range. I only know him through his despatches; but I have no doubt that he is as honourable and humane as an average Scotchman with one idea—in his case, that of 'British interests.' Yet weeks after Sir Henry Elliot had demonstrative proof of the Bulgarian atrocities, he persisted in declaring, before all England and the world, that those who believed in them were the victims of a 'credulity' engendered and fostered by designing Bulgarians. And he did not think it worth while to send home till the beginning of September an important despatch from one of his own Vice-Consuls, giving a full and detailed account of one of the very worst of the Bulgarian massacres. What did it matter? Those massacred were only Bulgarians, whose dreams of freedom might imperil 'British interests.' I am not at all caricaturing or misrepresenting Sir H. Elliot's feelings on this question. He has saved me all the trouble of inferential reasoning, by describing his own mental attitude in a despatch which will be found on page 197 of No. 1 Blue Book for 1877.¹

¹ When the British Ambassador was expressing, in this cold-blooded way, his indifference to the question whether it was 10,000 or 20,000 of innocent Bulgarians who had been ruthlessly massacred by his friends the Turks, he had Mr. Baring's Report before, with its harrowing details. The pathos of the following incident might have melted, one should suppose, even the heart of a devotee of 'British interests.' Mr. Baring, having described 'the horror of the scene' at Batak, says:—'The women were sitting on the ruins of their houses wailing and singing the most melancholy dirge, which could be heard some way from the

‘To the accusation of being a blind partisan of the Turks,’ he says, ‘I will only answer that my conduct here has never been guided by any sentimental affection for them, but by a firm determination to uphold the interests of Great Britain to the utmost of my power; and that those interests are deeply engaged in preventing the disruption of the Turkish Empire is a conviction which I share in common with the most eminent statesmen who have directed our foreign policy, but which appears now to be abandoned by shallow politicians or persons who have allowed their feelings of revolted humanity to make them forget the capital interests involved in the question. We may and must feel indignant at the needless and monstrous severity with which the Bulgarian insurrection was put down, but the necessity which exists for England to prevent changes from occurring here, which would be most detrimental to ourselves, is not affected by the question whether it was 10,000 or 20,000 persons who perished in the suppression. We have been upholding what we knew to be a semi-civilized nation, liable under certain circumstances to be carried into fearful excesses; but the fact of this having just now been strikingly brought home to us all cannot be a sufficient reason for abandoning a policy which is the only one that can be followed with a due regard to our own interests.’

If ‘the disruption of the Turkish Empire’ is to be delayed—‘prevented’ it cannot be—it will certainly not be by the feeble tinkering of diplomatists of the calibre of Sir Henry Elliot. But, be that as it may, the

village.’ This wail of disconsolate anguish was, of course, nothing to a diplomatist sitting at ease in a palace on the Bosphorus, and weighing, between the puffs of his cigarette, the comparative value of Bulgarian broken hearts and sordid ‘British interests.’

striking thing in this passage is the moral torpor which it displays on the part of the writer. The repulsive selfishness, the cynical brutality, which it betrays, are veiled from his mind and conscience by the idol of 'British interests.' If Sir Henry Elliot would only take the trouble to analyse the code of morality which he here preaches, he would find that it differs in no respect from that practised by brigands in the defiles of the Abruzzi, except in the circumstance that the brigands would probably think that the pursuit of their interests *was*, on the whole, 'affected by the question whether it was 10,000 or 20,000 persons who perished' in a raid upon a cluster of peaceful villages. Sir Henry does not see that if we are justified, 'with a due regard to our own interests,' in 'upholding a semi-civilized nation' like Turkey, and in thinking that, in comparison with our interests, 'the question whether it was 10,000 or 20,000 who perished' in Bulgaria is a mere bagatelle, *à fortiori* were the Turks justified in taking the same view of the matter, 'with a due regard to' *their* 'interests.' We have thus from Sir Henry Elliot a full and complete apology for the Bulgarian atrocities. Sir Henry, I dare say, did not perceive that this conclusion was involved in his premisses when he wrote his despatch. Men often act on premisses of which they do not see the necessary conclusion till the catastrophe is upon them, and it is too late to retreat. When the captain of Benhadad was told by the Prophet of Israel that he should live to do deeds like those of Batak, it was with unfeigned horror that Hazael exclaimed, 'But what! is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?' Yet Hazael did it, for all that. *Nemorepente fuit turpissimus*; and the aphorism is as true of nations as it is of their individual members. If the

disruption of the Turkish Empire should do nothing else but arrest this demoralising worship of sordid lucre, I, for one, should think the price a cheap one. When I see men like Sir Henry Elliot propounding principles which find their legitimate issue in tragedies like that of Batak, I cease to wonder that Turkish officials, from Grand Viziers down to zaptiehs, should be the characters they are. A few generations' training under the Apostles of National Selfishness might reduce even Englishmen to the level of the Turk.

And now I leave the reader to answer 'Who are the credulous?'

CHAPTER IX.

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT.

GUIDANCE for the future, in political as in private life, may often be derived from experience of the past. Let us, therefore, pass in rapid review the more conspicuous phases of the Eastern Question since the Crimean War.

I believe that no small share of the present complication is due to the fact that the Government which began the Crimean War did not live to finish it. If Lord Aberdeen's Government had been a party to the Treaty of Paris in 1856, there can be little doubt that some security would have been taken, beyond an empty promise from the Sultan, for the execution of the provisions of the Hatti-humayoun. Lord Palmerston was then in the heyday of his belief in Russian duplicity and Turkish regeneration ; and Lord Palmerston's influence it was which prevented the Powers from exacting from Turkey something more substantial than vapid professions of good-will towards her Christian population. When the Crimean War was imminent, but not yet declared, two divergent policies had already manifested themselves in the Cabinet ; the one headed by Lord Aberdeen, the other by Lord Palmerston. On Lord Aberdeen's side was the late Prince Consort. His remarkable 'Memorandum for the Consideration of the

Cabinet,' published in the second volume of Mr. Theodore Martin's 'Life' of him,¹ became the subject of controversy between the veteran statesmen. The points at issue are contained in the following extracts from the 'Memorandum':—

'In acting as auxiliaries to the Turks we ought to be quite sure that they have no object in view foreign to our duty and interests; that they do not drive at war whilst we aim at peace; that they do not, instead of merely resisting the attempt of Russia to obtain a protectorate over the Greek population incompatible with their own independence, seek to obtain themselves the power of imposing a more oppressive rule of two millions of fanatic Mussulmans over twelve millions of Christians; that they do not try to turn the tables upon the weaker power now that, backed by England and France, they have themselves become the stronger.

'There can be little doubt, and it is very natural, that the fanatical party at Constantinople should have such views; but to engage our fleet as an auxiliary force for such purposes would be fighting against our own interests, policy, and feelings.

'From this it would result that, if our forces are to be employed for any purpose, however defensive, as an auxiliary to Turkey, we must insist upon keeping not only the conduct of the negotiation, but also the power of peace and war, in our own hands, and that, Turkey refusing this, we can no longer take part for her.

'It will be said that England and Europe have a strong interest, setting all Turkish considerations aside, that Constantinople and the Turkish territory should not fall into the hands of Russia, and that they should

¹ P. 525.

in the last extremity even go to war to prevent such an overthrow of the balance of power. This must be admitted, and such a war may be right and wise. But this would be a war not for the maintenance of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, but merely for the interests of the European powers of civilization. It ought to be carried on unshackled by obligations to the Porte, and will probably lead, in the peace which must be the object of the war, to the obtaining of arrangements more consonant with the well-understood interests of Europe, of Christianity, liberty, and civilization, than the reimposition of the ignorant barbarian and despotic yoke of the Mussulman over the most fertile and favoured portion of Europe.'

'Next day,' I quote from Mr. Theodore Martin, 'Lord Aberdeen told the Prince that this Memorandum had given him the greatest pleasure, and that it expressed entirely his own opinion on the whole question. He had shown it to Lord Clarendon and Sir James Graham, who both agreed in it, and had then sent it to Lord John Russell, who returned it, saying "that he agreed very much with it." It was afterwards sent to Lord Palmerston, who expressed his views in a long letter ¹ to Lord Aberdeen a few days afterwards. It was his opinion that, having sent a squadron to support Turkey, we were now bound to see her safely through her quarrel, and at all hazards to maintain the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. He scouted the idea that we should make the war the means for securing from the Porte such a recognition of the rules of European civilization in respect to the treatment of her Christian subjects as the Prince foresaw would, unless granted

¹ Given *in extenso* in 'Lord Palmerston's Life' by Mr. E. Ashley, vol. ii. pp. 43-9.

and acted upon, be the fruitful source of future disquiet and warfare in Europe.’¹

This letter of Lord Palmerston, with the reply which it elicited from Lord Aberdeen, is a curious illustration of the way in which history is apt to repeat itself. The Prince had referred to the views and intentions of ‘the fanatical party at Constantinople.’ ‘It is said,’ retorted Lord Palmerston, ‘that the Turks are re-awakening the dormant fanaticism of the Mussulman race, and that we ought not to be the helping instruments to gratify such bad passions. I believe those stories about fanaticism to be fables invented at Vienna and St. Petersburg; we have had no facts in support of them.’

The war, said the Prince, ‘ought to be carried on unshackled by obligations to the Porte, and will probably lead, in the peace which must be the object of that war, to the obtaining of arrangements more consonant with the well-understood interests of Europe, of Christianity, liberty and civilization, than the reimposition of the ignorant, barbarian, and despotic yoke of the Mussulman on the most fertile and favoured portion of Europe.’ This aims, replied Lord Palmerston, at ‘expelling from Europe the Sultan and his two millions of Mussulman subjects:’ the very same perversion that has been so persistently fixed upon a phrase of Mr. Gladstone’s which, when read with its context, carefully excludes such misconstruction. Mr. Gladstone has lately observed that those of the clergy, who were somewhat suspicious of the late Prince Consort’s ecclesiastical influence during his life, would have found in this volume of his ‘Life’ good cause to wish that he had been Primate of All England

¹ Life of the Prince Consort, ii. pp. 527-8.

during the session which witnessed the passing of the Public Worship Regulation Act. It may also be said that his statesmanlike views on the Eastern Question leave room for regret that he is not Prime Minister of England at this moment. Lord Salisbury's mission to Constantinople would, in that case, have had a very different result from the melancholy deadlock to which the policy of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Derby has brought us, and out of which, so far as one can see, the sword alone can open a door of escape.

Lord Aberdeen's experience of foreign affairs was quite equal to Lord Palmerston's own, and was a good deal less prejudiced; and the wisdom of his reply to the latter's criticism on the Prince Consort's 'Memorandum' has received the ratification of history. The following extract will show politicians of the 'British-interests' school that Mr. Gladstone had been anticipated almost to the letter, in his indictment against the Turks, and by a statesman, too, who had the reputation of being somewhat the reverse of 'emotional' in his disposition:—

'Notwithstanding the favourable opinion entertained by many, it is difficult to believe in the improvement of the Turks. It is true that under the pressure of the moment benevolent decrees may be issued; but these, except under the eye of some Foreign Minister, are entirely neglected. Their whole system is radically vicious and inhuman. I do not refer to fables which may be invented at St. Petersburg or Vienna, but to numerous despatches of Lord Stratford himself, and of our own Consuls, who describe a frightful picture of lawless oppression and cruelty. This is so true that if the war should continue, and the Turkish armies meet with disaster, we may expect to see the Christian popu-

lations of the Empire rise against their oppressors ; and in such a case, it would scarcely be proposed to employ the British force in the Levant to assist in compelling their return under a Mahommedan yoke.’¹

The policy which Lord Aberdeen thought ‘scarcely’ possible in 1853 was, however, adopted in 1876. ‘The British force in the Levant’ was ‘employed’ ‘to assist in compelling’ the suppression of the insurrection of the Christian population of Turkey. I know all the explanations, not very consistent with each other, which have been given of the despatch of the British fleet to Besika Bay. But the fact remains that, when two or three ships, or at most a squadron, would have been amply sufficient for the purposes alleged in explanation, a fleet, the most powerful that England ever sent to sea, was sent into Turkish waters. Every Musulman in Turkey, from the Sultan downwards, interpreted that naval display as a British demonstration in defence of the integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire. Educated Turks have declared in my hearing that the presence of the English fleet at Besika was a material guarantee against any Russian attack upon Turkey. Even Sir Henry Elliot reports that ‘the knowledge that the British squadron [it was a fleet] was at Besika made them [the Turks] believe that they were not entirely deserted.’² And it was with a view to destroy that impression that Lord Salisbury, with his usual clearness of perception and directness of purpose, ordered the British fleet to the Piræus.

Lord Aberdeen evidently expected that the disruption of the Turkish Empire was not very far distant,

¹ Life of the Prince Consort, ii. 528.

² Blue Books of 1877, No. 1, p. 114.

and that a war by Russia would precipitate the catastrophe, if Turkey were left to her own resources. In that event, he thought it was 'difficult to say into whose hands these territories would ultimately fall; but whoever might profit by the result, it is to be expected that the Turks would disappear, never more to return to a soil upon which, in the face of Christendom, they have been so long established.'¹

These are plain indications that if Lord Aberdeen had been at the head of affairs when the Crimean War was concluded, proper security would have been taken on behalf of the oppressed Christians in Turkey. But another policy was then in the ascendant—the policy of unlimited confidence in Turkish promises and in the regeneration of the Turkish Empire. The Sultan was hurt that the Great Powers should bind him by treaty to the fulfilment of his promises. He appealed to his 'honour,' and offered to do of his own will all, and more than all, the Powers had asked of him. This has been the traditional policy of the Porte always. It will make any number of promises, and pledge any amount of that counterfeit coin, its 'honour;' but all binding engagements it repudiates, unless coerced to accept them. 'I intimated,' reports Lord Salisbury after an interview with the Grand Vizier, 'the possibility of an arrangement being come to in regard to the gendarmerie, if the Porte would undertake to form a corps with foreign officers; but his objection was not so much to the substance of the proposal as to entering into an engagement to carry it out.'²

Just so. The aim of the Porte is not to 'carry out' its promises, but to break them the moment they have

¹ Life of Prince Consort, p. 529.

² Blue Book No. 2, p. 198.

succeeded in warding off the threatened coercion of Europe. And after twenty years' experience of these broken promises, unrelieved by one solitary gleam of good faith, Lord Derby, with the credulity of a neophyte, proposes to give Turkey a few more years' grace to recover her lost honour—if that can be said to be lost which never existed. Nor only so; but he will take no security that any coercion shall be used even at the expiration of the period of grace if Turkey should still remain obdurate in her iniquity. Can fatuity go further?

As the interpretation of the Treaty of Paris is at this moment a bone of contention among statesmen and diplomatists, I shall make no apology for quoting here the clearest exposition of its scope and limits that I have ever seen in print. I extract it from a letter from the Rev. W. Wright, published in a Blue Book on 'Religious Persecutions in Turkey,' in the year 1874, No. 5, p. 43:—

'I have read the statement about the difficulty arising from the clause in the Treaty regarding "interference" with surprise, because it implies a misapprehension of the case.

'The Russian war was brought about by the meddling of France and Russia in the affairs of the Catholics and Greeks. For the more effectually securing the peace of the Empire and of Europe, it was thought desirable to do away with these protectorates, which were always a source of peril. The object was secured when Turkey bound herself by the Hatti-Sheriff of 21st February, 1856, to grant perfect religious toleration to all her subjects. The Firman was communicated to the Contracting Powers, and became the subject of the IXth Article of the Treaty of Paris.

This solemn pledge having been given by Turkey, the Contracting Powers expressed their satisfaction (*"les Puissances Contractantes constatent la haute valeur de cette communication"*) with the Firman, and they declared that it is not understood as giving them the right to mix themselves up in the relations of the Sultan with his people. (*"Il est bien entendu qu'elle ne saurait donner le droit aux dites Puissances de s'immiscer dans les rapports de Sa Majesté le Sultan avec ses sujets."*) Of course, it was not understood as giving a right to foreigners to mix themselves up in the internal affairs of the Empire, but, on the contrary, to render such a right no longer necessary; for the very object of the Hatti-Sheriff, in a political point of view, was to remove all grounds for foreigners mixing themselves up in the internal affairs of the Empire. The expressed understanding was in substance a promise of non-intervention, consequent on the solemn pledge given by Turkey to render their interference unnecessary; but the understanding ceases to exist when the pledges are broken which rendered the understanding possible. Had the Hatti-Sheriff not been issued the Contracting Powers would never have agreed to leave the Christians of Turkey to the tender mercies of their cruel rulers: but when the Turks came forward and proposed, in the most solemn form known to Turkish law, to do all for their Christian subjects which the Christian Powers could desire, and when that promise became incorporated in, and ratified by, the Treaty of Paris, then, and not till then, did the Christian Powers come to an understanding to abstain from doing what the Turks bound themselves to do. Whatever may have been the value of the understanding arrived at by the High Contracting Powers, in consequence of the Hatti-Sheriff

having become an integral part of the Treaty of Paris, *that understanding ceases to be obligatory as soon as the pledges are broken in consequence of which the understanding was arrived at; for we cannot suppose that the Contracting Powers would frame an Article, and then solemnly agree to consider it a dead letter.* The pledge given by Turkey, and the expressed understanding of the Contracting Parties consequent upon that pledge, form the IXth Article of the Treaty of Paris. Can the pledge be broken, and the understanding remain in force? Or can Turkey openly and cruelly violate her solemn pledge, and the IXth Article remain in force? The promise, or rather understanding, of non-interference rests solely on the pledge, and when the pledge is broken or withdrawn, the foundation, or *raison d'être* of the understanding ceases to exist. The Contracting Powers agreed not to mix themselves up in the relations of the Sultan with his subjects, just because he gave them the most solemn pledge known to International and domestic law, to treat his subjects justly and rationally; but when he openly and cruelly breaks those pledges, the logical consequence is, that they will interfere on behalf of the people for whom the Firman was issued; or rather, they will insist that Turkey of herself cannot break with impunity the IXth Article of the Treaty of Paris.'

The simple truth is, that the awful sanctity of the Treaty of Paris is a political doctrine invented by Lord Beaconsfield last autumn. It was never heard of, in his rigid sense, till he propounded it on behalf of Turkey. When the Treaty was under discussion in the House of Commons in 1856, Mr. Gladstone went into the whole question, and the drift of his speech may be gathered from the following observations:—‘ It I

thought that this Treaty of Paris was an instrument which bound this country and our posterity, as well as ourselves, to the maintenance of a set of institutions in Turkey which you are endeavouring to reform, if you can, but with respect to which endeavour few can be sanguine . . . , I should look out for the most emphatic word to express my condemnation of the Peace.' 'At the same time, standing upon the firm ground of principle and precedent—pressing forward in the interest of humanity—we are bound to see that those who profess the same faith with ourselves are not trampled upon.'

With respect to the IXth Article of the Treaty, Mr. Gladstone said :—

'No power is renounced; and when the Treaty proceeds to speak of a collective or single interference on the part of the Christian Powers, all it says is, that no right of interference, whether single or collective, shall grow out of the fact that the Hatti-Cherif has been communicated to the Powers. But it says not one word of the policy and practice which, from time to time, have been pursued, or anything in the way of preventing us from performing that sacred duty, even as we were in the habit of performing it long before the war commenced.'¹

Lord Palmerston followed Mr. Gladstone in the debate, and anyone who reads his speech will see that he was as far as possible from committing himself to that absurd bondage to the letter of the Treaty which is now in vogue in certain quarters. He took pains even to explain that when he spoke of the integrity and independence of Turkey, he did not at all mean the integrity and independence of Turkish rule. He had no love for the Turks as a race. His great object was to

¹ Hansard, vol. cxlii. pp. 94–5.

keep the territory of Turkey, not its present rulers, whole and independent. He said so in so many words. Speaking of the Treaty of 1856, he said: 'We did not engage to maintain in the Turkish Empire this or that race—to maintain one dominant party or the other.' People may differ about Lord Palmerston's policy in Turkey. I frankly own, with all deference, that I think it mischievous. All his calculations have been falsified by the event. But don't let us misrepresent Lord Palmerston. His policy differed essentially from the policy of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Derby. It never occurred to him that the Treaty of Paris was intended to bar its signatories for ever from interfering in the affairs of Turkey; as he proved when he sent a naval and military force to coerce Turkey in 1861, in spite of the protests and threats of the Sultan and his Divan. Still less would he have agreed with Lord Derby in thinking 'Her Majesty's Government' bound to 'deprecate the diplomatic intervention of the other Powers in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire.'¹ One of the speakers in the debate on the Treaty of Paris expressed his belief that the Hatti-humayoun would remain a dead letter, and this is the way in which Lord Palmerston answered him:—

'The Treaty having recorded that that Firman has been issued by the Sultan, it is perfectly plain to my mind that it cannot be revoked. In fact, that it should be revoked is a thing which I hold to be as impossible as that the sun should go backwards. The fact of the Firman having been adverted to in the Treaty, and the issuing of it having been recorded in the Treaty, would give the Allied Powers that moral right of diplomatic

¹ Parliamentary Papers on Turkey in 1876, No. 3, p. 194.

interference and of remonstrance with the Sultan which I am perfectly convinced would be quite sufficient.’¹

We may wonder that Lord Palmerston could have had this exuberant faith in the Turkish Government even twenty years ago; but, at any rate, the policy which he thus proclaimed is the contradictory of Lord Derby’s. The late Sir James Graham once exclaimed in the House of Commons, in his impatience of arguing a great question on a narrow and technical issue, ‘let us get out of *Nisi Prius*.’ I wish we could get out of *Nisi Prius* in discussing the Treaty of Paris. When I read Lord Beaconsfield’s speeches on the subject, I feel that he would have applauded Herod the Tetrarch for his fidelity to his treaty engagement with the daughter of Herodias.

The next Parliamentary landmark in the Eastern Question is the debate on the Union of the Danubian Principalities on May 4, 1858. The question of their union came before the Congress of Paris in 1856, and the Plenipotentiaries of France and England expressed themselves strongly in its favour. The Plenipotentiary of France, Count Walewsky, spoke as follows on behalf of his Government:—

‘The first Plenipotentiary of France conceives that, as the union of the two Provinces satisfies the requirements brought to light by an attentive investigation into their true interest, the Congress should admit and proclaim it.’

The English Plenipotentiary, Lord Clarendon, spoke to the same effect, as follows:—

‘The Plenipotentiary of Great Britain shares in and supports this opinion [of the French Plenipotentiary], relying expressly on the utility and expediency of

¹ Hansard, vol. cxlii. pp. 124–6.

taking into serious consideration the wishes of the people, which it is always right to take into account.'

The following promise is accordingly recorded in the XXIVth Article of the Treaty of Paris :—

'His Majesty the Sultan promises to convoke immediately in each of the two Provinces a divan *ad hoc*, composed in such a manner as to represent most closely the interests of all classes of society. These divans shall be called upon to express the wishes of the people in regard to the definite organization of the Principalities.'

Austria and Turkey opposed the union, and, when an appeal was made to the people, influenced the elections in Moldavia by the grossest intimidation. England was in favour of quashing the elections and having fresh ones. This was naturally opposed by the two Powers which were interested—so, at least, they thought—in preventing the union. A fresh election took place, however; and, not to go into unnecessary details, the imbroglio resulted in another Congress of Paris in the beginning of the summer of 1858. The late Lord Derby was Prime Minister at the time, and the present Premier was leader of the House of Commons and Chancellor of the Exchequer. Mr. Gladstone, who then occupied the *rôle* of an independent member, initiated a great debate on the subject by moving a resolution in favour of the union of the two Principalities. The debate, and the whole circumstances of the case, throw so much light on the present aspect of the Eastern Question, that it may be useful to place an epitome of them before the reader.

Having sketched the history of the question, and quoted, as above, the XXIVth Article of the Treaty of Paris, Mr. Gladstone said :—'I am sorry that Austria

and Turkey were united in steadily opposing the quashing of the elections; but still quashed they were.' In the second election the people of both Principalities voted in favour of the union 'with singular unanimity.' 'All felt that if they hoped to be free, and wished to keep the soil of their country unpolluted by the heel of the stranger, it could only be by the union of the Principalities.'

After arguing in eloquent terms that the union of the Principalities was 'the natural and necessary means of developing their resources, of realizing the idea of national existence, of strengthening the organization of their Government, of diminishing their expenses, of attaining every internal political object that reasonable men can desire,' Mr. Gladstone went on to 'beseech this House to consider well before it determines that the fate of these two countries is to be governed by considerations other than the welfare of the people. It will be a dangerous and slippery course on which to embark when we refuse that which is suited to four or five millions of men; and when we say that God Almighty sent them into the world, not to pursue their own happiness and welfare by such lawful and reasonable means as are in their power, but to be made the victims of those whose public and private interests are subserved by other views, extraneous to their interests, but which an overpowering force has determined to carry into effect.'

Whose interest, then, was it to oppose the union of the Danubian Principalities? Austria's primarily, and probably Russia's also. Assuming this to be the case, what was the best means of resisting the aggression of either power? Mr. Gladstone answered that question in a strain of generous eloquence and cogent

argument of which the following passage may serve as a specimen :—

‘ Well, Sir, I assume that the union of the Principalities is good for the Principalities themselves. For whom then is it not good? I am not prepared to say that it is good for Austria or Russia. I will not undertake to say that it is convenient to Austria to have freedom in conjunction with prosperity close by her threshold; but that is her fault and not mine. I am very sorry for it. I believe that the Principalities, if they are not united, will be a constant source of danger and uneasiness to European policy. If you do unite them, the question whether the example they will set of good government will be convenient to the States that have different ideas of good government, is not for us to settle. Then, with regard to Russia, I am not prepared to say that the union of the Principalities will be for the interest of Russia, considered as an aggrandizing and conquering Power.¹ . . . I suppose I must assume that at some period or other the ambition of Russia will be again awakened. Sir, in so saying, while I recognise such an event as probable, I will not assume the right of speaking of Russia as if some peculiar stain of essential immorality attached to the ambition felt and experienced by Russia, and which is not felt and experienced by any other country. No doubt Russia is an ambitious and self-aggrandizing Power; but I should be sorry to imply that some other countries and nations, if they had been settled down on

¹ Both Austria and Russia have since then entered on the path of Constitutional Government, and Mr. Gladstone has availed himself of more than one opportunity to say that a criticism, which might be just enough in the beginning of 1858, would be neither just nor generous now.

that particular portion of the surface of the earth inhabited by the Emperor of Russia and his people, would not have shown just as great a wish to expand and to enlarge their borders to the East and South as Russia herself. But, still, that is the policy of Russia, and as such you must take cognizance of it; and if so, how do you mean to check and resist it? Do you think that, under all circumstances, we shall have the power of resisting it by another union with France? I am not sanguine in that opinion. I believe that such a union was owing to a very rare conjuncture of circumstances, and one little likely to occur again. It was an uncommon rashness on the part of the late Emperor of Russia that made it possible to check Russia by the united action of France and England. Russia will watch her opportunity, and will seize it better next time than in the year 1853. Does anyone believe that it is by England being always ready to spend 50,000,000*l.* or 100,000,000*l.* that Russia will be kept in check? Does anyone believe not only that the people of England will be always ready to make this sacrifice, but that we shall also find the people of France similarly disposed? It is not altogether unlikely that the people of England, bearing in mind the feelings and traditions of the late war, would make great efforts for a similar purpose; but the combination of France with England is not, I think, to be depended on as affording a permanent check to the ambition of Russia. Surely the best resistance to be offered to Russia is by the strength and freedom of those countries that will have to resist her. You want to place a living barrier between her and Turkey. There is no barrier, then, like the breasts of freemen. It is true that the people of these Principalities are not accustomed to take a part in the

military operations of Europe; but the Americans, when the war of independence broke out, were not a military nation, yet they proved themselves more than a match for your well-trained and disciplined armies. If you want to oppose an obstacle to Russia, arm those people with freedom, and with the vigour and prosperity that freedom brings; but after the pledges that have been given, and the wishes that have been excited and stimulated, do not keep them in this miserable state of weakness and disunion. Do not palter with them. After the pledges which have been given, do not withhold that which alone can satisfy their desires and vindicate your fame; but give them that which, if you will give them, will raise up in that quarter friends for you, and antagonists to the ambition of Russia, more powerful than any that you can buy with money.'

How applicable is all this to the circumstances in which we now find ourselves! Mr. Gladstone hinted, not obscurely, that 'the Mahometan Power in Europe' could not 'be permanently maintained.' But he argued for a policy which should make of its political decease a gentle euthanasia, by helping its subject population, as opportunity offered, to obtain that measure of freedom and self-government which would enable them to occupy the territory of the Turk when his reign came to an end. He contended then, as he contends now, for 'the territorial integrity of Turkey;' that is, for practical independence for such of her population as proved themselves fit for it, yet with a link of vassal connection with the Sultan as suzerain, under the protection of Europe, to prevent a scramble for territorial annexation on the part of any of the neighbouring Powers. There are many passages in this splendid

speech which I am tempted to quote; but isolated quotations would give but a feeble idea of its political prescience, so completely verified by the event, and of its masterly grasp of the whole Eastern Question. I recommend those who fancy that Mr. Gladstone began his study of the Eastern Question last autumn to read this eloquent speech of 1858.

Mr. Gladstone was immediately followed by Mr. Seymour Fitzgerald, then Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. After some compliments to Mr. Gladstone's eloquence, he proceeded to say that 'he could not sufficiently express his astonishment that the Right Honourable Gentleman . . . should have ventured upon a course which was not only utterly unprecedented, but calculated to lead the House and the Country into the most serious embarrassment;' because the Plenipotentiaries of the Great Powers were then sitting in Paris to consider the expediency of sanctioning or thwarting the unanimous declaration of the Principalities in favour of union—a declaration, be it remembered, which the Great Powers themselves had openly invited. The Under-Secretary, however, resisted the motion of Mr. Gladstone on three points: first, because the Roumanians could not govern themselves or maintain their independence; secondly, because their union as an autonomous State was incompatible with our engagements under the Treaty of Paris; thirdly, because the union of the Principalities would eventually lead 'to the partition of Turkey.'

Lord Palmerston also made a strong speech against Mr. Gladstone and in favour of the Government.¹ He

¹ Discussing the question of the Danubian Principalities, in a letter to Lord Russell in 1855, Lord Palmerston says that the object his Government had in view was 'to emancipate the

expressed his utter disbelief in any wish for union on the part of the people of the Principalities themselves. It was all a factitious excitement got up, for sinister purposes, by 'foreign agency.' Carry out Mr. Gladstone's policy, and the result would be that 'Russia would in a moment overspread' Roumania, which would then become a scene of intrigue and confusion to the detriment of her peace and welfare, or would follow the fate of Poland, and be altogether absorbed by Russia, or divided between her and Austria. And, above all, Mr. Gladstone's policy would be inimical to the 'independence and integrity of the Turkish Empire;' and therefore Lord Palmerston gave an energetic support to the Government against it. Lord John Russell, as he then was, followed Lord Palmerston in a speech which is as conspicuous for political sagacity as that to which it was a reply is for the absence of that quality. Lord John supported Mr. Gladstone's motion with sound reasoning and cordial sympathy; and the debate was closed by Mr. Disraeli on behalf of the Government in a speech of which it is enough to say that, like the Aylesbury speech, it was more remarkable for the boldness of its assertions than for the accuracy of its allegations.¹

Principalities from foreign interference, and to tie them more closely to the Sultan.'—*Life* by Ashley, ii. p. 86.

¹ For instance, he endeavoured to parry Mr. Gladstone's quotation of the French Plenipotentiary's declaration in favour of the union of the Principalities at the Treaty of Paris by the following melodramatic expostulation:—'That at this very moment, when there exists between the Governments of France and England a complete identity of political feeling on this subject, and that when their views are well considered and matured, an Address like this should be offered to the consideration of the House, I must ever deplore.'

The debate was made remarkable not only by the eloquence of the veteran orators of the House of Commons, but by a brilliant speech in support of Mr. Gladstone by a young member on the Conservative benches. ‘The House should consider maturely,’ he said, ‘what would be the fate of those Principalities if the motion of his Right Honourable friend should be rejected. If the vote of England should be against the Principalities, it was impossible that they could remain in their present position as mere debateable ground for the pretensions of Russia and Turkey. . . The probability was that if the strong assistance of Europe were given in aid of the claims of Turkey, the Principalities would be handed over for the present to Turkey, the most oppressive and rapacious of all Governments. As long as Turkey lasted they would be subjected to her rule; and when Turkey fell, as she ultimately must do, they would become a prey to some other Powers, who would divide her remains between them. He trusted that the House of Commons would show themselves upon this occasion to be the supporters of freedom. They had made many efforts and had talked a great deal about propagating the principles which they professed, and of spreading the institutions which they revered, in other countries. To do that they had engaged in very questionable diplomacy, and had often violated the rights of other Powers, with very little benefit to the cause of freedom. . . . The consequence was that on the Continent of Europe our claims to be regarded as the champions of liberty were looked upon as hypocritical boastings; for while we were loud in our professions we were lax in our practice. There was now an opportunity, which might never recur, of supporting those principles which we revered, of establishing those

institutions to which we owed our own happiness, and of securing the freedom and welfare of thousands of our fellow-creatures. That opportunity had been afforded in consequence of a pledge given by ourselves, and if it should be neglected and thrown away, the responsibility would fall upon us, and all would feel that it had been lost by our betrayal and our falsehood.'

The orator's name is now in everybody's mouth. When he delivered the speech from which I have just quoted he was known in the House of Commons as Lord Robert Cecil. The speech made a marked impression on the House, and Mr. Disraeli devoted a considerable part of his own speech to the task of neutralising that impression. 'If the views expressed by the noble Lord the member for Stamford are sound,' he said—'if the House accepts those political views—then you are justified in supporting the Address to the Crown. If, indeed, the fall of Turkey is to be looked on as a realised fact—if all that the Parliament of England has done during the last five years—if all that the people of England have suffered during the last five years on this subject is an entire illusion—then you would be justified in ratifying the sentiments of the noble Lord the member for Stamford. But as I believe the opinions of the noble Lord are raw and crude opinions, as I believe they are not the opinions of anyone who has sufficiently thought on the subject on which he has spoken with so much authority, I must decline to follow his example. But that such opinions should be in any degree sanctioned by the Right Honourable gentleman the member for the University, a member of the Cabinet that incurred the awful responsibility of entering into a war to maintain

the integrity of the Turkish Empire,¹ is to me matter of deep astonishment.'

And, therefore, 'on the ground of high policy,' Mr. Disraeli 'would deprecate the House sanctioning the Address.'

How wonderfully the whirligig of time brings its revenges! The 'high policy,' for which Mr. Disraeli in 1858 obtained in the House of Commons a majority of 178, was soon afterwards blown to the winds by the patriotic energy of the Roumanians, and would not

¹ This is an instance of Mr. Disraeli's habit of adroit misrepresentation. 'The integrity of the Turkish Empire' is an equivocal phrase, and has been used in the case of Turkey in a special sense—namely, as meaning no more than the non-annexation of any of her territory to a foreign State. In the speech to which Mr. Disraeli's was mainly a reply, Mr. Gladstone had taken great pains to explain that he used the phrase in its restricted sense. But it suited Mr. Disraeli to fasten upon him a policy which he had just carefully disclaimed. And so with Lord Robert Cecil, who had expressed his opinion that Turkey must 'ultimately fall.' Mr. Disraeli quotes him as arguing that 'the fall of Turkey is to be looked on *as a realised fact.*' Even as early as the eve of the Crimean War Mr. Gladstone was careful to explain that when we spoke of the 'independence and integrity of Turkey,' we did so in a sense very different from that in which the phrase was applicable to European States. In a speech delivered at Manchester on October 12, 1853, on the occasion of the unveiling of a statue of Sir Robert Peel, Mr. Gladstone said: 'In speaking of the integrity and independence of the Ottoman empire, we do not attach to that expression the same sense which it bears when we speak of England or of France, because we know that, in the case of Turkey, the expression is applied to an empire which is full of anomalies, full of miseries, full of difficulties—an empire which, ever since we have known it, has been for Europe a subject of discussion and intervention.'¹

¹ For this quotation I am indebted to M. Emile Girardin; and I am obliged to rely on his accuracy, since I have not a copy of the original to refer to.

now find a sane supporter in the United Kingdom. Mr. Gladstone's policy, on the other hand, which Lord Palmerston so cavalierly pooh-poohed and which Mr. Disraeli regarded with 'deep astonishment,' has proved its wisdom by the best of all tests—the verdict of experience and the approbation of Europe. A Ministerial paper found fault the other day with Lord Salisbury for supporting Mr. Gladstone's policy at Constantinople rather than Lord Beaconsfield's. If Lord Salisbury did so, he may derive consolation from his Parliamentary reminiscences, and recall the debate on the Danubian Principalities on May 4, 1858. He supported Mr. Gladstone's policy on that occasion with the independence which has ever distinguished him, and was lectured by his chief for his 'raw and crude opinions.' It is a singular Nemesis of history that this young orator of 'raw and crude opinions' on the Eastern Question should be the one member of Lord Beaconsfield's Cabinet who commands the confidence of England on that very Question, though he happens for the moment to be associated with a policy which is acting in a direction opposite to his own at Constantinople.

The next diplomatic landmark in the development of the Eastern Question is the despatch of Prince Gortchakoff in 1860. On the 4th of May in that year the Prince called together the Ambassadors of all the Great Powers, in order to examine with them the 'painful and precarious position in which the Christians of Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria were placed;' and he issued, soon after, a circular despatch urging the assembling of a Conference in order to revise the Treaty of Paris, and make better provision for the security of the Christian population of Turkey. The following

extract will suffice to place the reader in possession of the views of the Russian Government :—

‘The attention which the discussions upon the condition of the East has excited throughout Europe, makes us desirous of freeing from all error and false and exaggerated interpretation the part which the Imperial Cabinet has taken, and the object which it proposes to itself in this matter.

‘For more than a year the official reports of our agents in Turkey have made us acquainted with the increasingly serious condition of the Christian provinces under the rule of the Porte, and especially of Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria. This condition does not date from to-day, but, far from getting better, as was hoped, it has become worse during the last few years.

‘In this conviction, after having, on the one hand, vainly sought to enlighten the Turkish Government on the gravity of the circumstances, by communicating to it successively all the accounts which have been made known to us of the abuses committed by local authorities; and after having, on the other hand, exhausted all means of persuasion that we could use among the Christians, in order to induce them to patience, we have frankly and loyally addressed ourselves to the Cabinets of the Great Powers of Europe. We have explained to them the circumstances, as described in the reports of our agents; the imminence of a crisis; our conviction that isolated representations, sterile or palliative promises, will no longer suffice as a preventive; and also the necessity of an understanding of the Great Powers among themselves and with the Porte, that they will consult together as to the measures which can alone put an end to this dangerous state of things. We have not made absolute propositions as to the course to

be adopted. We have confined ourselves to showing the urgency, and indicating the object. As to the first, we have not concealed the fact that it appears to us to admit of no doubt, and to allow of no delay.

‘First of all, an immediate local inquiry, with the participation of Imperial delegates, in order to verify the reality of the facts; next, an understanding which it is reserved for the Great Powers to establish with each other and with the Porte, in order to engage it to adopt the necessary organic measures for bringing about in its relations with the Christian populations of the empire, a real, serious, and durable amelioration.

‘There is nothing here, then, in the shape of an interference wounding to the dignity of the Porte. We do not suspect its intentions; it is the Power most interested in a departure from the present situation. Be it the result of blindness, tolerance, or feebleness, the concurrence of Europe cannot but be useful to the Porte, whether to enlighten its judgment or to fortify its action. There can no longer be a question of an attack on its rights, which we desire to see respected, or of creating complications, which it is our wish to prevent. The understanding, which we wish to see established between the Great Powers and the Turkish Government, must be to the Christians a proof that their fate is taken into consideration, and that we are seriously occupied in ameliorating it. At the same time, it will be to the Porte a certain pledge of the friendly intentions of the Powers which have placed the conservation of the Ottoman Empire among the essential conditions of the European equilibrium. Thus both sides ought to see in it a motive: the Turkish Government, for confidence and security—the Christians, for patience and hope. Europe, on its part, after past

experience, will not, in our opinion, find elsewhere than in this moral action the guarantees which a question of first rank demands, with which its tranquillity is indissolubly connected, and in which the interests of humanity mingle with those of policy. Our august Master has never disavowed the strong sympathy with which the former inspire him. His Majesty desires not to burden his conscience with the reproach of having remained silent in the face of such sufferings, when so many voices are raised elsewhere, under circumstances much less imperious. We are, moreover, profoundly convinced that this order of ideas is inseparable from the political interest which Russia, like all the other Powers, has in the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire.

‘We trust that these views are shared by all the Cabinets; but we are also convinced that the time for illusions is past, that any hesitation, any adjournment, will have grave consequences. In combining, with all our efforts, to place the Ottoman Government in a course which may avert these eventualities, we believe that we are giving it a proof of our solicitude, while at the same time we fulfil a duty to humanity.’

Nothing, surely, could have been more candid and straightforward than this, or more thoroughly loyal to the engagements of Russia under the Treaty of Paris. And has not the course of events more than justified the wisdom of the policy which Prince Gortchakoff so earnestly recommended?

What response did England make to this appeal from the Russian Government? Our Ambassador at Constantinople, Sir Henry Bulwer, was instructed to obtain information on the condition of the Christians in Turkey. He obeyed his instructions by sending to

the British Consuls a list of excellent questions, but many of them so craftily worded as plainly to suggest the answer which the Ambassador wished to receive. And, not satisfied with this, he sent with the questions a circular letter, which amounts to an instruction, enforced by a menace, to report as much as possible in favour of the Turkish Administration. In spite of this, however most of the Consuls gave a truly deplorable account of the sufferings of the Christian subjects of the Porte, extracts from which have been given in the preceding pages.

Meanwhile the Syrian massacres took place, and the question of how to deal with this outburst of Turkish ferocity absorbed the attention of the Cabinets, to the exclusion of the more general inquiry suggested by Prince Gortchakoff. The English and French Governments felt that, having lately saved Turkey from destruction and deprived the Christians of the protection of Russia, they were bound in a special manner to interfere; and their intervention took the form of armed coercion. To this, indeed, Lord Palmerston consented 'unwillingly, fearing lest there would be much difficulty in getting the French out again.'¹ The Porte endeavoured, by the mouth of the Grand Vizier, A'li Pasha, to avert foreign occupation by threats of more massacres;² and the English Ambassador at the French Court played the *rôle* of Sir Henry Elliot at Constantinople, by conjuring up a dreadful vision of what the Turks would probably do if they were driven to the wall. But M. Thouvenel, the French Foreign Minister, cut short all such arguments by the sensible reply: 'M.

¹ 'Life' by Ashley, ii. p. 181.

² Correspondence relating to the Affairs of Syria, 1860-61, p. 13.

Thouvenel observed that he could not admit the reasoning, that because a Turkish Minister was apprehensive that if a foreign force should be landed in Syria there would be disturbances at Constantinople, the Great Powers were on that account to desist from a measure that had appeared to them necessary for the future tranquillity of that country. If such reasoning were once to be admitted, it would be put forward on every occasion when an abuse was to be corrected in Turkey.' ¹

Lord Russell, then Foreign Secretary, replied to Lord Cowley's feeble and halting diplomacy in an energetic despatch, on account of which I have forgiven him much else in his diplomacy that I dislike. 'The accounts which have been received from Syria,' said Lord Russell, 'during the last ten days have been of the most frightful character. Besides the numbers killed in actual conflict, 5,500 persons have been the victims of massacre, and 20,000, including the widows and children of the murdered, are wandering in a state of famine through the country. While these dreadful things were going on the Turks appear to have been inactive spectators, where they were not accomplices in the work of massacre. At Deir-el-Kamar Osman Pasha disarmed the Christian inhabitants, and, after eight days of privation, exposed them to be shot and cut to pieces by their ferocious enemies. The conduct of the Turks in other places exposes them to the suspicions of favouring the wholesale murders of the Christians. Indignant at this want of humanity and of energy, Her Majesty's Government have received, and accepted, a proposal of the Emperor of the French to send European troops to Syria to prevent further ex-

¹ Correspondence relating to the Affairs of Syria, 1860-61, p. 14.

cesses. . . . I have spoken throughout this despatch of French troops only. Her Majesty has determined to send a squadron to the coast of Syria, with power to be vested in the Admiral to land marines, if necessary.’¹

France and England accordingly got the other signatories to the Treaty of Paris to agree to a Protocol sanctioning foreign occupation, to be undertaken by France and England on behalf of all the Powers. Still the Porte threatened more massacres, and France and England sternly replied by more than doubling the army of occupation, and bidding Turkey to renew the massacres *if she dared*. Turkey did not dare. Turkey never does dare to fulfil her threats when she clearly understands that even one of the Great Powers really means war, *with the sanction of the rest*. The Anglo-French force was despatched to Syria, with a French and English Commission, and Fuad Pasha was sent to represent Turkey. The first thing the Anglo-French Commission did was to denounce the ringleaders of the massacres, the chief of them being a Turkish Pasha. Fuad Pasha was obliged to put his colleague on his trial, and the guilty Pasha was, like Chefket Pasha, honourably acquitted. This failure having been reported to the English and French Governments, their Commissioners in Syria were instructed to tell Fuad Pasha that France and England did not mean to be trifled with, and that justice must be done. The Porte, finding that the Great Powers, or at least two of them, really meant business, tried the guilty Pasha over again, found him guilty, and hanged him. Lord Dufferin (the English Commissioner) then drew up a Constitution for the Lebanon, which gave it practical

¹ Correspondence relating to the Affairs of Syria, 1860-61, pp. 115-6.

autonomy, and which, after some modifications, received the sanction of the Governments of France and England. The Porte objected, of course, to this invasion of its independence; but on being quietly told that the new Constitution must be accepted before the foreign troops left Syria, Turkey at once yielded; and the Lebanon has enjoyed peace and happiness ever since.

What part did Russia play in this transaction? A thoroughly loyal part. As soon as the Cabinet of St. Petersburg learnt the intentions of the English Government, Prince Gortchakoff expressed the satisfaction of the Czar and of his Government, and intimated that orders should be sent to the Russian naval force on the Syrian coast to co-operate 'with the British naval force,' and also 'to consult with the officer in command of Her Majesty's squadron as to the best mode of affording protection to the European residents and Christians.'¹

And not only so, but on the first symptom of a premature withdrawal of the Anglo-French force from Syria, Prince Gortchakoff remonstrated in the following manly and honest despatch:—

'As the period fixed for the evacuation of Syria draws nigh, we cannot help looking upon the prospect of it with lively apprehension. Your Excellency was called upon, at the time of the last Conference at Paris, to express the conviction of His Majesty the Emperor that the premature cessation of the occupation, before a definitive organization and the installation of a regular power had replaced the regular guarantees resulting to the Christians from the presence of the European troops, would produce calamities which the Great Powers ought seriously to anticipate, in the interest of humanity and of their own dignity. We state with

¹ Correspondence relating to the Affairs of Syria, 1860–61, p. 7.

regret that not one of the facts which have happened since that time, and the information which has reached us, is of a nature to disperse those fears. We see them, indeed, participated in by strangers of all countries residing in Syria, whose interests and very existence are in question, and who have just attested the unanimity of their sentiments and views by the petition which they have addressed, in the most pressing terms, to the Great Powers of Europe. Will you have the goodness, M. le Comte, to bring this subject to the notice of the Representatives of the Cabinets who took part in the last deliberations? We consider that we should be wanting in our duty if we did not call their attention to the dangers which might result from a complete termination of the foreign occupation on a fixed day, without any regard to the critical situation in which Syria might be left, and without any of the previous conditions having been as yet fulfilled, which, in our opinion, might have supplied the place of the guarantees of which the Christian population might see themselves suddenly deprived by the departure of the very troops who had received from Europe the mission of providing for their security. In such a case, it would only remain for us to decline formally, as we have already done, all responsibility for the results of a determination of which we had foreseen and pointed out the consequences.

‘Your Excellency is instructed, by order of our august Master, to allow no doubt on this head to remain in the minds of your colleagues.’¹

This dignified remonstrance took effect; and the foreign troops remained in Syria till they saw the new

¹ Correspondence relating to the Affairs of Syria, part ii. pp. 106–7.

Constitution, giving autonomy to the Lebanon, put into fair working order.

What a commentary is this on the present state of things! When Prince Gortchakoff wrote this despatch Russia had not a single soldier in Syria; yet, so far from feeling any soreness or jealousy on that account, the Cabinet of St. Petersburg used its influence successfully to prolong the Anglo-French occupation.

The next landmark is the Cretan insurrection of 1866-7. The late Lord Derby was Prime Minister, and the present Earl, then Lord Stanley, was Foreign Secretary. Count Beust was Foreign Minister of Austria, and the policy which he advocated will be apparent from the following extracts from despatches written by him at that period. In a despatch which he wrote to the Austrian Ambassador in Paris he said:— ‘However much Austria might wish to see the Sultan retain his throne, she could not refuse to sympathize with and assist, up to a certain point, the Christian population in Turkey, who had often just cause of complaint, and who were bound to several of the races under Austria’s sway by the bonds of blood and of religion.’ On being questioned by the Russian Ambassador in Vienna as to how much he meant by ‘up to a certain point,’ Count Beust explained that Austria wished to encourage among the Christian population of Turkey ‘a wider development of their privileges, and to promote the establishment of a system of autonomy, *to be limited only by a tie of vassalage*. That, moreover, would be the surest means of making a lasting peace between the Sultan and the Rayahs; and Austria is especially interested in contributing to that result, with a view to averting the chances of a conflagration which she has every reason to deprecate.’ In a subsequent de-

spatch to Prince Metternich, dated January 1, 1867, M. de Beust proposed a revision of the Treaty of Paris, 'and of the subsequent acts.' 'The remedies,' he said, 'which have been applied during the last few years have proved powerless to overcome the difficulties which are increasing every day. The Eastern Question, taken as a whole, presents an aspect very different from that which it presented in 1856, and the stipulations of that period, exceeded as they have been on more than one important point by events which have since then arisen, no longer suffice to the necessities of the present situation.' M. de Beust went on to argue that the Treaty of Paris had failed to provide sufficient guarantees for the better government of the Christians of Turkey, and he proposed accordingly 'to put the populations of the Sultan under the protectorate of the whole of Europe, by endowing them, under guarantees from all the Courts, with independent institutions in accordance with their various religions and races.'¹

The French Government cordially supported M. de Beust's views, proposed 'a medical consultation' of the Great Powers on the condition of the Sick Man, and suggested the necessity of applying 'heroic remedies,' beginning with the annexation of Candia to Greece. Prince Gortchakoff advocated the same policy, and expressed his opinion that 'the only possible escape open to the Powers from the course of expedients and palliatives, which up to the present time had but served to increase the difficulties,' was to encourage 'the gradual development of autonomous States' out of the Rayahs of Turkey. All the other Powers recognised the wisdom of this policy, with one exception. That exception was

¹ Despatch to Austrian Ambassador at Constantinople, dated January 22, 1867.

the present Foreign Secretary of England. He opposed it with all his might, and succeeded in breaking up then, as he has broken up now, the European concert. Instead of the statesmanlike policy on which the other Powers were agreed, Lord Stanley prevailed on the Powers to rest satisfied with a new Turkish Constitution for Crete, spontaneously offered by the Porte. The Constitution turned out, as all 'spontaneous' Constitutions of the Porte invariably do turn out, to be an unmitigated imposture, and Crete is now, thanks to Lord Derby's diplomacy, on the verge of another insurrection. With this experience to guide us, it seems to me that we have had quite enough of Lord Derby's feeble compromises.

We now come down to the outbreak of the last insurrection in Bosnia and the Herzegovina, of which the events are so fresh that I need not do more than recall the main turning-points of the negotiations. These are the Consular Delegation, the Andrassy Note, the Berlin Memorandum, and the Conference at Constantinople. Let us glance at them in succession.

Lord Derby strongly objected to the Consular Delegation to the insurgents, because the proposal seemed to sanction some slight diplomatic interference in the affairs of Turkey.¹ The Porte, however—for reasons which will presently appear—begged the English

¹ 'When such a mission was proposed, the Grand Vizier addressed to your Excellency a request that the British Consul might be instructed to join the mission. I therefore informed your Excellency, in my despatch of the 24th of August, that her Majesty's Government consented to this step with reluctance, as they doubted the expediency of the intervention of foreign Consuls. Such an intervention, I remarked, was scarcely compatible with the independent authority of the Porte; it offered an inducement to insurrection as a means of appealing to foreign sympathy against Turkish rule, and it might not improbably open

Government to agree; and Lord Derby yielded under protest, complaining that the Turkish Government did not understand its own interests. Consul Holmes was accordingly sent, but with instructions so stringent as to make his mission a farce. ‘Although the views and instructions of the different Governments are identic,’ he was told, ‘you will at the same time take the greatest pains to avoid everything that, either in the eyes of the Turkish authorities or in those of the insurgents, might have the appearance of united action, and you will therefore abstain from collective steps, but will rather act individually. . . . Your efforts must be directed to making the insurgents understand that they must not calculate upon the support of any Power, and to persuading them to enter into negotiations with the Imperial Commissioners, and to make known their grievances to them. You will state to them that her Majesty’s Government will use their influence with the Sublime Porte, in recommending that the legitimate grievances which may be established shall be remedied or removed; but you will be careful to avoid pledging her Majesty’s Government in regard to any measures to be taken, which must be the result of a direct understanding between the parties. It may be impossible for you to prevent the Christians from making known to you the nature and extent of their grievances, but, without refusing to listen to what may be necessary to enable you to report to her Majesty’s Embassy, in order that the insurgents may not delude themselves into supposing that the Powers guarantee the realisation of the wishes which they may submit to the Imperial

the way to further diplomatic interference in the internal affairs of the Empire.’—*Despatch of Lord Derby to Sir H. Elliot*. See Parliamentary Papers of 1876, No. 2, p. 96.

Commission, you will avoid provoking any discussion of their grievances. The first object being to prevent bloodshed, you will urge the insurgents to avoid attacking the Imperial troops during the progress of the negotiations, but to disperse and return to their villages; and when you have fulfilled the duty thus confided to you, you will return to Mostar or Serajevo, or such other point in your district as you think most desirable, without waiting to know the result of the negotiations which you and your colleagues may have been the means of opening between the Turkish Commission and the insurgents.’¹

Such were the instructions with which the mission of Consul Holmes to the insurgents was fettered and rendered abortive beforehand. They were issued by Sir H. Elliot on August 24, 1875, and formally approved by Lord Derby on September 15, 1875.² Of course the mission failed; but there is one incident in connection with it which concerns the honour of England, and which, I trust, will be made a subject of Parliamentary inquiry. The insurgents were to be laid under an engagement not to attack the Turkish troops while the negotiations were going on; but when this was proposed to them they expressed their fear that the Turkish troops would attack them when they were off their guard. They were apparently reassured on this point by Consul Holmes, who carried out his instructions to the letter; that is, he did his best to fill the insurgents with despair, and then left them, without waiting to know the result of the negotiations.

Soon after leaving the insurgents, about 180 in number, Consul Holmes ‘met a couple of battalions, with provisions and ammunition, proceeding in the direction

¹ Parliamentary Papers of 1876, No. 2, p. 10. ² *Ibid.* p. 17.

from which we had come.' On inquiry, he was told that the troops were going to attack the insurgents whom the Consuls 'had just left.' 'I felt indignant,' says Mr. Consul Holmes, 'as did my colleagues, at this attempt, as it seemed, to profit by the fact of our having assembled together a certain number of insurgents, to attack them when off their guard.' Instead, however, of going back to prevent a massacre, Consul Holmes went on to Stolatz, the Kaimakan of which confirmed the intelligence he had received as to the intentions of the two Turkish battalions. Consul Holmes expressed his disapproval, and then the Kaimakan, after the manner of Turkish officials, told a lie, and 'said that he did not know; that he rather thought the troops were marching to Belikeia with provisions for the garrison there.' The end of the affair was that the insurgents were surprised. Some of them were massacred, and most of them wounded. Chefket Pasha, of infamous renown, described this cold-blooded massacre as 'clever strategy'; and the anxiety of the Turkish Government to get the English Consul to join the other Consuls became apparent. Consul Holmes, in the very teeth of the plainest facts, persisted in believing that the insurrection had its origin and support in foreign intrigue, and that if the leaders could be got rid of, the whole movement would collapse. But the difficulty was how to catch the leaders. In this dilemma the Consular Delegation offered the very trap for which the Porte was searching. Both for this reason, and also because the Porte saw in the Consular Delegation a device by which it might 'relieve itself of all responsibility,' it urged Lord Derby to allow Consul Holmes to join the other Consuls.

Of course the Turkish Government was brought to book for this outrageous massacre, and reparation

demand. On the contrary, not even a remonstrance was addressed to it. 'The massacre,' says Consul Holmes, 'might have been a very serious thing *for us* if it had happened one day sooner.' 'The account which I have received from Consul Holmes,' says Sir H. Elliot, 'relative to the engagement [*'engagement'* indeed!] between the Turkish troops and the body of insurgents with which the Consuls had just been in communication, *is not satisfactory*. He states that, while the Consuls were among the insurgents, the Wali [*i.e.* Governor] proceeded to Stoltz, and ordered the troops to march against those assembled to meet the Consuls. On the 19th, having left the insurgents, they met the troops and were apprized of their destination. The attack was made on the 20th. On the side of the insurgents there were six killed and many wounded. If this affair had happened a day sooner the consequences to the Consuls might have been fatal. The insurgents, Mr. Holmes adds, will probably hesitate to meet them again.'¹ I should just think so.

The only notice Lord Derby took of this massacre was a casual reference to it five months afterwards, in one of his despatches on the Andrassy Note. 'The mission of the Consuls,' he said, 'had no practical results in inducing the insurgents to lay down their arms. What little benefit might have arisen from it was defeated by the ill-advised proceedings of the Turkish troops, as reported in Consul Holmes's despatch of the 28th of September.'

Though the Porte did not succeed in massacring all the insurgents who were induced to meet the Consuls, the 'clever strategy' was partially successful, and the Foreign Minister of Turkey conveyed the gratitude of the Sublime Porte to the English Government, and

¹ Parliamentary Papers of 1876, No. 2, p. 27.

recommended Consul Holmes for promotion, in the following despatch :—

‘ March 15, 1876.

‘ M. L’AMBASSADOR,—Your Excellency is aware that Mr. Holmes, Her Britannic Majesty’s Consul at Serrajevo, was the English delegate sent to Monastir at the commencement of the insurrection.

‘ The friendly disposition evinced by Mr. Holmes on this occasion, and the perfect tact with which he has discharged his delicate duties, make it incumbent upon us to convey the thanks of the Sublime Porte to the Government of Her Majesty, and to recommend Mr. Holmes most especially to their favour.

‘ I beg that your Excellency will make known these feelings to the Foreign Office, and I have, &c.

(Signed) ‘RASCHID.’

This despatch I don’t hesitate to characterise as one of the most insulting communications ever addressed to an English Minister. Consul Holmes was used by the Porte (quite unintentionally on his part, of course) as a decoy duck to lure the chief men among the insurgents into an ambush for massacring them; and the *ruse* having succeeded, this Government of assassins has the cool audacity to express its gratitude to the Government of Queen Victoria, and to give a flattering certificate of efficiency to Consul Holmes for ‘ the perfect tact with which he has discharged his delicate duties.’

And how did Lord Derby receive the insult thus offered to the English nation through him? The following despatch will show :—

‘ *The Earl of Derby to Sir H. Elliot.*

‘ Foreign Office, March 28, 1876.

‘ SIR,—I transmit to you a copy of a letter addressed

by Raschid Pasha to Musurus Pasha, instructing him to convey to Her Majesty's Government their appreciation of the able manner in which Mr. Consul Holmes has carried out his duties at Mostar; and I have to request that your Excellency will communicate the contents of this letter to Mr. Holmes, and express to the Porte the satisfaction with which Her Majesty's Government have received this testimony to Mr. Holmes's abilities.

‘I am, &c.

(Signed)

‘DERBY.’¹

Comment would but weaken the effect of this humiliating exhibition of a ‘spirited foreign policy.’

The next point is the Andrassy Note. It is important to remember that this came from the Austro-Hungarian Cabinet, since Lord Derby has more than once quoted Austria as likely to put a spoke in the wheel of strong measures. Here is his own account of the matter :—

‘Count Beust took occasion to observe that the communication intended to be addressed to the Porte was not regarded by his Government in the light of mere good advice. They wanted a pledge that the reforms which they proposed should be carried into execution, failing which they would not undertake to use their influence with the Christian population to advise them to lay down their arms. I stated in answer that I clearly understood this to be the Austrian point of view. So far as Her Majesty's Government were concerned, we were not prepared to do more than offer such friendly advice as the circumstances seemed to require.’

¹ See Parliamentary Papers of 1876, No. 2, pp. 26–29, 42, 97, and No. 3, pp. 47, 52.

In a subsequent despatch Lord Derby returned to the subject, as follows:—

‘His Excellency [Count Beust] reminded me that at our last meeting he had expressly said that the object of the Austro-Hungarian *démarche vis-à-vis* of the Porte was not friendly counsel only, but to obtain a definite promise that the reforms the Austrian Government advocated should be really carried into effect. That the Sublime Porte should enter into an explicit engagement towards the guaranteeing Powers to carry out the reforms in question and give a written promise to that effect, without which the Cabinets would not succeed in pacifying the disturbed districts, His Excellency added that I doubtless remembered that the Russian Ambassador had expressed to me the intention of his Government to elicit a similar written engagement from the Porte. Count Beust stated that he had been informed by telegraph on the 24th instant that France and Italy had unreservedly acceded to this view, and that his Excellency could hardly lay too much stress on the disappointment which his Government would experience if the British Government disagreed in this point.’¹

Sir H. Elliot, for once, gave good advice. Writing to Lord Derby on January 17, 1876, he says of the Andrassy Note, that ‘the proposals with which it concludes, *if put into an identic instruction to the representatives here* (which is understood to be what is intended) would, in my opinion, be accepted by the Porte without much difficulty.’²

‘Which is understood to be what is intended.’ Intended by whom? By all the Great Powers, except

¹ Parliamentary Papers of 1876, No. 2, pp. 91-2.

² *Ibid.* p. 101.

England. Identical action among the Powers is just what Lord Derby has striven, with such fell success, to prevent, from the opening of the diplomatic campaign till now. Lord Derby, in the first place, applied his powers of destructive criticism to the Andrassy Note, and picked it to pieces *con amore*. For instance, one of the reforms which Lord Salisbury considered most essential was that a part of the revenue raised by taxation should be applied to the local wants of the district which contributed it. This was accordingly put forward prominently in the programme of the Conference. It is also one of the marked features of the Andrassy Note. But Lord Derby objected to it. He thought it 'might have a most serious effect in impeding the execution of those public works and other measures of general utility [where are they?] upon which the improvement of the condition of the population depends.'¹ In fact, when the Conference met, the Turkish Plenipotentiaries found themselves supplied with a full armoury of arguments against all its proposals out of the previous despatches of Lord Derby.

Having thus damaged, as well as he could, the Andrassy Note, he 'instructed Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople to confine his representations in giving a general support to Count Andrassy's proposals to oral communications.'¹

The Porte was in ecstasies, as it well might be, at the adroit way in which Lord Derby had checkmated the diplomatic intervention of the other Powers. 'Raschid Pasha,' says Sir H. Elliot, 'has expressed the most lively satisfaction at the tenour of the instruc-

¹ Parliamentary Papers of 1876, No. 2, p. 95.

² *Ibid.* p. 98.

tions that your Lordship is forwarding to me, of which I communicated to him the telegraphic summary.' ¹

The Porte, thus assured of Lord Derby's sympathy, accepted the Andrassy Note in a general way, and issued an *Iradé* of reforms, which, fortified by Lord Derby's active support, it took care to keep in the safe region of abstract promises. But though Lord Derby had no heart in the matter, caring only, as far as one can judge from his despatches, to bear Turkey safe through her diplomatic troubles, the other Powers were thoroughly in earnest, and the Berlin Memorandum was the consequence. The reception given to that document in England is one of the most humiliating chapters in this controversy. Lord Derby had at last exalted the horn of John Bull, and we were all singing 'Rule Britannia' at the top of our voices. The British Lion, after years of humiliation, had at length whisked up his drooping tail, bearded the Russian bear, and sent him grunting back to his snows and forests. The alliance of the three Emperors was dissolved, and Austria, France, and Italy were delivered, by an unwonted display of British pluck and diplomatic wisdom, from the bondage of the two imperious and Imperial chancellors. The last point was particularly insisted upon. Foreign Correspondents assured us that Austria and France and Italy had given a reluctant consent to the Berlin Memorandum and were now sincerely grateful to England for the death-blow which she had dealt it. The Blue Book tells a different story, as I shall show presently. Meanwhile let us see what the Berlin Memorandum really proposed and what Lord Derby said in reply. Short as is the interval which

¹ Parliamentary Papers of 1876, No. 2, p. 105.

separates us in time from those two documents, we are divided from them by a whole ocean of thought and feeling, and most persons have consequently forgotten, not only their general character, but also their bearing on subsequent events.

The Berlin Memorandum was received by Lord Derby on the 15th of last May. No document that I have ever read appears to me more genuine in its purpose, more solemn in its tone, more straightforward in its intentions, or more free from any semblance of *arrière pensée*. The proposals contained in the Memorandum are five in number, namely,—

1. That the Turkish Government should furnish materials for rebuilding the dwelling-houses and churches of the houseless and ruined refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and give them at the same time means of subsistence ‘till they could support themselves by their own labour.’ The limitation is important, as we shall see presently.

2. That the Turkish Commissioner appointed to distribute this aid should take counsel with the Mixed Commission provided for by the Andrassy Note.

3. That, ‘in order to avoid any collision,’ the Turkish troops should be concentrated ‘on some points to be agreed upon,’ ‘at least until excitement had subsided.’

4. ‘Christians as well as Mussulmans should retain their arms.’

5. ‘The Consuls or Delegates of the Powers shall keep a watch over the application of the reforms in general, and on the steps relative to the repatriation in particular.’

‘If, however,’ the Memorandum goes on to say, ‘the armistice were to expire without the efforts of the Powers being successful in attaining the end they

have in view, the three Imperial Courts are of opinion that it would become necessary to supplement their diplomatic action by the sanction of an agreement with a view to such efficacious measures as might appear to be demanded in the interest of general peace.¹

On the same day on which Lord Derby received the Berlin Memorandum he also received a despatch from the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg in which occur these words :—

‘ I feel persuaded that the predominant wish of the Emperor Alexander is to maintain peace, and that his policy in regard to Eastern affairs is perfectly disinterested, and that his sole object is to aid in pacifying the insurgent provinces of Turkey and in maintaining the Ottoman Empire.’²

That the French and Italian Governments shared this conviction as to the honest and pacific intentions of the Emperor of Russia is evident from the fact of their having telegraphed at once their adhesion to the Berlin Memorandum.³ Lord Derby, on the contrary, not only refused the assent of England to the Memorandum, but supplied the Porte with a series of arguments against it. He communicated it at once to the Turkish Ambassador, with a stream of his usual destructive criticism. And on the very day on which it reached him he wrote a despatch to Lord Odo Russell, of which it is worth while to quote the leading points. He objected to the Porte being asked to give any help to the returning refugees on three grounds. First, it ‘ would cost a large sum of money, which the Porte did not possess and could not borrow.’ Secondly, it would be unjust to make the Porte ‘ responsible for repairing

¹ Parliamentary Papers of 1876, No. 3, pp. 140–1.

² *Ibid.* p. 143.

³ *Ibid.* p. 151.

destruction which had been, in the main, the work of the insurgents themselves.' Thirdly, it 'would be little better than a system of indiscriminate almsgiving,' which 'would prove utterly demoralising to any country.'

As to the first of these objections, the criticisms of the Austrian and French Governments appear unanswerable. The latter reminded Lord Derby that the demand to which he objected amounted to no more than 'only urging the complete fulfilment of an engagement which the Porte had already entered into.' The former made the pertinent observation that the prosecution of the war, which necessarily resulted from Lord Derby's rejection of the proposed armistice, would be likely to cost the Porte more than the aid demanded for the returning refugees. None of the Powers condescended to notice Lord Derby's 'indiscriminate almsgiving' objection, which carefully evaded the explicit reservation of the Berlin Memorandum, that aid should only be given till such time as the refugees 'could support themselves by their own labour.' It seems hardly worthy of England's Secretary for Foreign Affairs to have urged, in a question of European policy, an objection which would hardly be entertained in an ordinary begging case by the Secretary of the Mendicancy Society. Lord Derby declared a few weeks afterwards, and has lately repeated, that he had not 'anything to unsay that he had said in the past.' Is it still his opinion, then, that the destruction of churches and houses in the insurgent districts was 'in the main the work of the insurgents themselves'?

The second article in the Berlin Memorandum was rejected by Lord Derby because it would infringe the authority of the Sultan.

To the proposal of an armistice he objected because it might interfere with the military plans of the Porte.

But perhaps the most extraordinary objection of all is that which Lord Derby made to the proposal that the Christian as well as the Mussulman population should be allowed to retain their arms. 'If the insurgents were to return armed to meet the Mussulmans, also retaining their arms, a collision would be inevitable.' So Lord Derby avoids the 'collision' by letting loose the armed Mussulmans to fall upon and slaughter in cold blood the unarmed and unresisting Christians! And this in spite of the following passage in a despatch from the British Ambassador at Vienna:—'Count Beust having also stated that your Lordship disapproved the proposal that the Christians should retain their arms, his Excellency [Andrassy] answered *that the Christians would prefer the disarming of the Mussulmans*; but as it would be impossible, without serious disturbance, to apply such a measure to men who had been accustomed to wear arms from their childhood, the only way of establishing equality between the two populations would be to extend the right to do so to Christians.'¹

Here then, in substance, is Lord Derby's famous reply to the Berlin Memorandum; a reply which was greeted with acclamations of praise for its courage and wisdom. Its courage, I admit, cannot easily be over-rated. Its wisdom may be read in the light of the conflagrations which followed in Bosnia, in Bulgaria, and in Servia, and which England's rejection of the Berlin Memorandum had no small share in kindling.

The next point in my review is the impression made on the other great Powers by England's unexpected defection. We were assured at the time, by the usual organs of information, that all the Powers,

¹ Parliamentary Papers of 1876, No. 3, pp. 176-7.

with the single exception of Russia, were truly grateful to England for having checkmated the diplomatic craft of Prince Gortchakoff. Austria had not courage to resist his pressure. France and Italy would not have been so ready to telegraph their adhesion if they had known that England intended to stand aloof, and they were now thankful for the door of escape which Lord Derby's reply had opened for them. As for Prussia, she was under certain obligations to Russia for her friendliness during the Franco-German war; but Prince Bismarck was no doubt heartily glad that England had defeated a policy for which he had no particular affection.

I appeal to the memory of my readers as to whether I have not given a true representation of the state of opinion which prevailed during the public discussions of the Berlin Memorandum. Yet it is an opinion which has not one shred of evidence to support it from the first page to the last of the Blue Books. Russia observed a dignified silence. But the other Powers were urgent in their regret at the refusal of the English Government to co-operate with them, and in their hope that it would reconsider its determination.

'Prince Bismarck admitted that the several articles of the Memorandum were open to discussion, and might be modified according to circumstances, and that he, for one, would willingly entertain any improvement her Majesty's Government might have to propose; but he greatly regretted that her Majesty's Government had not felt able to give a general support to the principle of the plan submitted to them by the Northern Powers, and agreed to by France and Italy, and had felt obliged to withdraw from the cordial understanding so happily established between the six

Great Powers in regard to the pacification of the Herzegovina.' Five days later 'His Excellency renewed the expression of the regret the German Government felt at the inability of her Majesty's Government to support the policy of the five Great Powers at Constantinople.'

The Duc Decazes 'again expressed his surprise and regret at the refusal of her Majesty's Government to join in the new proposals of the three Imperial Courts.' Two days later the Duc Decazes told our representative in Paris 'that in view of the regrettable difference in the matter of this Memorandum which had arisen on the part of England, he had addressed a pressing appeal (*une démarche instante*) to the English Cabinet.'

The Duke added 'that the Austrian Chargé d'Affaires called upon him after Prince Hohenlohe's departure, and informed him that he was instructed to say that Count Andrassy would try to retard the intended step at Constantinople if the Duc Decazes could see some chance of inducing England to draw nearer to the views of the other Powers, at least as to the armistice.'

The Italian Minister 'repeated the regret which he had already expressed at this decision, adding that he hoped at all events her Majesty's Government would consent to advise the Porte to accept the armistice; and if they could not join in recommending the other measures, that they would at least say nothing which might be an encouragement to the Turkish Government to reject them. If the Turkish Government did not feel that they would be supported by England in declining to accept the proposals, he had some hope that they might agree to them . . . He

was firmly convinced that Russia had no ambitious views at this moment, and that she was sincerely desirous for a termination of the insurrection. . . . If the present proposals were not accepted, some more decisive measures would become necessary.'

Austria held the same language. Count Andrassy urged that England should, at all events, not satisfy herself with giving a blank refusal to the propositions of the Berlin Memorandum ; that she should at least agree to recommend an armistice, or make suggestions of her own. And he concluded with a serious warning as to the consequences likely to result from the Turks believing that they had the countenance of England in rejecting the Berlin Memorandum.

The Ottoman Government was not slow to follow the initiative of Lord Derby. His hostile criticism of the Berlin Memorandum, which is dated May 15, was communicated to Musurus Pasha on May 16 ; and on May 21 Raschid Pasha despatched to the capitals of the Great Powers the Porte's rejection of the Berlin Memorandum. The Turkish Minister follows the line of argument traced out for him by Lord Derby, and is particularly unctuous as to the impolicy of allowing the Christians to carry arms in the midst of an armed Mussulman population. 'Such a course of action would be equivalent to giving free scope to every evil nature, and to render the conflict unending.' No doubt the conflict would end much sooner, as the tragedy of Batak has proved, if the Christians in Bosnia and Herzegovina had nothing but their bare breasts with which to oppose the bullets and bayonets of the Turks.

The French Minister of Foreign Affairs made one more effort to persuade the English Government to 'reconsider their decision,' so 'that England might,

after all, renounce her present isolation, and thus a concert of the six Powers might still be obtained.'

To all these remonstrances and appeals Lord Derby turned a deaf ear. He would do nothing himself, nor allow anybody else to do anything. 'I told Count Beust that I had no plan to propose.' 'I was certainly not prepared to draw up a constitution in detail for the Turkish Provinces.' (Nobody had asked him to do anything of the kind.) Would he then agree to a Conference? inquired the French Government. 'I replied that I saw no objection to a Conference in principle, but that I thought it would be useless without a basis;' and a basis Lord Derby would not take the responsibility of suggesting. The simple truth is that the other Great Powers were solicitous for the welfare of the oppressed Christians in Turkey, and Lord Derby reserved all his sympathy for their Mahometan oppressors. This comes out in two of his despatches to Sir H. Elliot, *à propos* of the Berlin Memorandum. He assured the British Ambassador that 'Her Majesty's Government would not assume the responsibility of advising the Porte, who must be guided by what they thought best, after due consideration, for the welfare of the Ottoman Empire.' 'I have to point out to your Excellency,' he writes to Sir H. Elliot on May 19, 'that her Majesty's Government have, since the outbreak of the insurrection in Bosnia and the Herzegovina, *deprecated the diplomatic action of the other Powers in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire.*' He wishes the Porte, however, to understand the opinion of her Majesty's Government, 'that the gravity of the situation has arisen in a great measure from the weakness and apathy of the Porte in dealing with the insurrection in

its earlier stages,' as well as from the 'neglect of ordinary principles of good government.'¹

It is but justice to Lord Derby's colleagues to state that he communicated his rejection of the Berlin Memorandum to the representatives of the Great Powers without consulting the Cabinet, with the exception, I presume, of the Prime Minister. He consulted them afterwards; but they had been virtually committed to his policy in the interval. And, moreover, it is impossible that men who have charge of great empires, like Lord Salisbury and Lord Carnarvon, or of laborious departments, like Mr. Gathorne Hardy and Mr. Cross, can find time to master, on an emergency, the details of diplomatic correspondence. They must leave a large margin of discretion to the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, who ought, therefore, to bear the brunt of blame.

We now come to the Conference at Constantinople, where the state of affairs is as follows:—On one side are Russia, Germany, Austria, France, Italy, all agreed upon three points: first, that the true origin of the disturbances in Turkey is the atrocious misgovernment of the Porte; secondly, that some measure of self-government for the disturbed provinces is a *sine quâ non* of peace; thirdly, that the promises of the Turkish Government are absolutely valueless, and that consequently coercion, in some shape or another, is essential. This is what the Blue Books reveal with an affluence of evidence. Let the following examples suffice:—

In the end of August the Italian Government pro-

¹ See Parliamentary Papers of 1876, No. 3, pp. 152, 174, 177, 178, 185, 187, 188, 191, 192, 193.

posed to that of Austria that the Powers, having formulated their demands, should present them in a Collective Note to Turkey. On hearing of this, Sir Henry Elliot telegraphed in hot haste to Lord Derby that he 'thinks the Italian proposal of a Collective Note very objectionable.'¹ Lord Salisbury, on his way to Constantinople, had an interview 'with Signor Melegari, the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and discussed with him the present grave state of affairs in the East. His Excellency began by emphatically expressing the opinion that the conscience of Christendom would not be satisfied unless effective guarantees were provided for the better government of the Christian populations of Turkey. . . . His Excellency went on to express the opinion, upon which he insisted with much force, that the action of the Powers ought not to be derived from, or limited by, the Treaty of Paris.'²

In the end of September Russia proposed coercion in the following form: the occupation of Bosnia by an Austrian force; of Bulgaria by a Russian force; and the entrance of the united fleets of the Powers into the Bosphorus. Prince Gortchakoff expressed his belief that the mere 'threat of taking these measures' would be sufficient, provided only that the Powers acted together, and the Porte thus saw that they meant business. Prince Gortchakoff also informed Lord Derby, through Count Schouvaloff, that if England considered that 'the entry of the united fleets into the Bosphorus would be preferable alone, and sufficient for the object in view, the Russian Government were ready to consent to this course, and would abstain from making the two other propositions mentioned above.'³

¹ Blue Books of 1877, No. 1, p. 91.

² *Ibid.* No. 2, p. 19.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 317-8.

The policy of ordering the united fleets into the Bosphorus was cordially approved by Count Andrassy;¹ and his representative held the same language to Lord Derby in London. 'It is not sufficient,' he said, 'to obtain the conclusion of an armistice. It becomes of the highest importance that conditions of peace should be agreed upon without delay by the Powers, *and enforced by them on the Porte.*' 'With regard to the Provinces themselves, Count Andrassy thinks that the reforms promised before the war should be carried into effect in their fullest extent, and that guarantees should be provided for their due execution.' The German Government also agreed, and were even 'disposed to advocate larger concessions to the insurgent provinces in the direction of autonomy' than Lord Derby had dreamt of, or relished. 'M. de Bulow,' says the British Chargé d'Affaires at Berlin, 'again referred to the necessity of effectively providing for the future of the Christian populations; and, if I mistake not, M. de Bulow is in favour of making larger concessions in the direction of autonomy. His last words to me on this occasion were: "Some radical measures must be taken to rescue these poor people from their wretched condition."'² We have already seen how earnest the French Government was in advocating the same policy.

Lord Derby, on the other hand, confined himself to the congenial task of picking holes in every proposal presented to him, and offered a steady resistance to every suggestion of coercion, whether moral or physical. Once indeed, towards the end of last September, he allowed himself to hint at coercion; but he dropped it

¹ Blue Books of 1877, No. 1, pp. 406, 472.

² *Ibid.* p. 305.

like a hot chestnut, and we never hear of it again. 'I had never failed to intimate,' he writes to Sir H. Elliot, 'that an effective reform of the administration of the disturbed Provinces, with securities for its proper execution, was a condition on which the mediating Powers must insist as necessary to a full and satisfactory pacification.'¹ What meaning Lord Derby attaches to the word 'insist,' it is difficult to conceive. The only thing which he 'insisted' on in the Conference was that the English Plenipotentiary should 'insist' on nothing at all.

The Conference held its first meeting on December 21. On December 22 Lord Derby wrote a despatch to Lord Salisbury (which would not reach Constantinople before the beginning of January), in which he told him 'that her Majesty's Government had decided that England will not assent to, or assist in, coercive measures, military or naval, against the Porte.'² This most important piece of information, which would reach Lord Salisbury some ten or twelve days after the Conference was opened, was communicated to the Turkish Government, behind Lord Salisbury's back, two days *before* the Conference was opened. As this point has been involved in some confusion, I shall state the facts, as they appear in the Blue Book.

On January 8 Lord Derby wrote a despatch to Lord Salisbury, in which he says:—'The Turkish Ambassador left with me on the 24th ultimo the telegram from Safvet Pasha, of which I enclose a copy. His Excellency did not inform me of the text of the communication from him to his Government, of which mention is made in it.' The telegram is as follows:³—

¹ Blue Books of 1877, No. 1, p. 295.

² Blue Book No. 2, p. 56.

³ *Ibid.* p. 182.

‘I have read it to the Grand Vizier. His Highness received this communication with deep gratitude, and begs you to express to His Excellency Lord Derby his acknowledgments. You will explain to his Lordship, in the name of the Grand Vizier, that the Sublime Porte reckons more than ever on the kind support of the Government of Her Britannic Majesty, under the difficult circumstances we are passing through. The great wisdom and spirit of justice which distinguish the eminent Minister who directs with such loyalty the foreign relations of England form a sure guarantee for us, that he will gladly give us a new proof of his kindness and valued friendship.’¹

The question is, what called forth this strong expression of gratitude on the part of Midhat Pasha—gratitude which was so urgent that it must needs be telegraphed? Lord Derby frankly owns that he does not know what message Musurus Pasha had sent which elicited this grateful response. But it is clear what he thought at the time. In giving an account of the incident to Lord Salisbury on January 8, he says:—

‘I noticed subsequently the expression used in the telegram, that “the Sublime Porte counts more than ever on the friendly support of her Britannic Majesty’s Government in the difficult circumstances through which Turkey is passing.” Being anxious to avoid the possibility of any misconception as to the line of policy followed by her Majesty’s Government, I addressed a private note to his Excellency, reminding him that in an unofficial conversation which had taken place between us on the 19th ultimo, I had informed him that, although her Majesty’s Government did not themselves meditate or threaten the employment of

¹ Blue Book No. 2, p. 62.

active measures of coercion in the event of the proposals of the Powers being refused by the Porte, yet that Turkey must not look to England for assistance or protection if that refusal resulted in a war with other countries.’¹

It is evident from this that, when Lord Derby’s memory was fresh, he connected the telegram of thanks from the Porte with the all-important information communicated to Musurus Pasha on Dec. 19, namely, that England did not meditate coercion in the event of the Porte refusing the proposals of the Conference. The Duke of Argyll, however, having made a point of Safvet Pasha’s telegram, in his speech in the House of Lords on Feb. 20, Lord Derby consulted Musurus Pasha, who told him that the telegram had nothing to do with politics, being in fact only an acknowledgment, on the part of Midhat Pasha, of some kind expressions which Lord Derby had used *à propos* of Midhat’s appointment to the Grand Viziership. So that we are to believe that Musurus Pasha went to the trouble and expense of telegraphing Lord Derby’s kind expressions, spoken in an ‘unofficial conversation,’ but that he did not think it worth while to telegraph the infinitely more important communication about coercion. I don’t believe that Musurus Pasha could have been so neglectful of the duties of his office. It is of course possible that he sent Lord Derby’s kind expressions also; but it would be doing him an injustice to suppose that he did not telegraph the welcome intelligence as to England’s not sanctioning coercion. We are therefore left to our own private judgment as to which item of news elicited Midhat’s effusive thanks. I have no doubt.

¹ Blue Book No. 2, p. 182.

But the important point, after all, is, that Lord Derby informed the Turkish Ambassador in London, two days before the Conference met, and two weeks before he informed Lord Salisbury, that Turkey had nothing to fear from England if she chose to reject the proposals of the Conference. Of that there is no doubt, for Lord Derby has himself confessed it. So nervous, indeed, was Lord Derby lest Lord Salisbury should put too much force into his arguments, that he wrote to him again on January 13: 'But having reference to the Conference breaking up without result, it will be necessary to avoid all appearance of menace, and to hold no language that can be construed as pledging her Majesty's Government to enforce those proposals at a later date.'¹ He had previously told the French Ambassador that he need not look for any support from the English Cabinet 'in measures of coercion against Turkey';² and he steadily refused to sanction the presentation of any identic Note or Protocol to the Porte on the part of the Plenipotentiaries.³ The more attenuated, too, the programme of the Conference became, the more pleased was Lord Derby.⁴

In short, Lord Salisbury's mission was doomed to failure from the first. It is to Lord Derby, even more than to Midhat Pasha, that the ill success of the Conference must be attributed. It is impossible to read the Blue Books without seeing that if Lord Salisbury had been left to himself he would have succeeded without much difficulty in overcoming the obstinacy of the Porte. But 'the Grand Vizier believed he could "count upon the assistance of Lord Derby and Lord Beaconsfield."' ⁵ And he had excellent reasons for his belief.

¹ Blue Book No. 2, p. 261.

² *Ibid.* p. 136.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 21, 54, 183. ⁴ *Ibid.* p. 183. ⁵ *Ibid.* p. 183.

It is no exaggeration to say that from the commencement of the insurrection in the Herzegovina till now, Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Derby have devoted all their ingenuity and all their ability to prevent, as Lord Derby has candidly avowed, any 'diplomatic intervention of other Powers in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire.' They have objected to and secured the defeat of every proposal which would really better the condition of the Christians of Turkey, and have plainly declared their intention 'to do no more than state to the Turkish Government, if their opinion was asked, that they [the Turks] had better follow the policy which they thought most consistent with their own interests.'¹

For my part, I do not see why the Conservative party should not settle this question as well as the Liberals. And I have no doubt that they would settle it if they could only manage to send Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Derby on a few weeks' leave of absence. The tone of the rest of the Cabinet is in quite a different key from that of the Premier and Foreign Secretary. While these hold their present posts I despair of what would otherwise be easy—a peaceful solution of the Eastern Question. 'The English Government has interfered,' said a Turkish official two years ago, when he was threatened with Lord Derby's wrath; 'the English Government has interfered; but the English Government is only like a drum—skin and wind.'² We have had too much of the 'skin and wind' diplomacy of Lord Derby during the past eighteen months, and I

¹ Parliamentary Papers of 1876, No. 3, p. 193. Cf. p. 236 (No. 390) and p. 188.

² Correspondence on Religious Persecution in Turkey, No. 5, p. 28.

wish I could think that a more robust policy were likely to take its place.

My task is done. I wish I had more time and ability to do it better justice. But my facts are genuine, and they need no graces of literary ornament to commend them to the reader's attention. They are eloquent with the pathos of unutterable woe. I am sorry if I have used language of undue warmth in any part of this volume. I confess I feel strongly on the subject. The miseries of the Rayahs of Turkey have haunted me like a nightmare since my visit to the East. I have now before my mind the image of a Bosnian refugee, who, after relating the tale of outrage which drove him from his home, said, in a tone of despair, and with a look of unspeakable anguish on his face: 'And England will not let us be free.' Yes; that is the saddest reflection of all to an Englishman. England not only will not help to deliver the victims of Turkish cruelty and lust, but she uses her vast influence to paralyze the action of those who would gladly set them free. And all for 'British interests.' Millions of human beings must continue to live in a state of foul and cruel slavery, lest peradventure any harm should accrue to British interests. 'Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord? and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?' Surely it might be worth while trying whether, even in this case also, honesty might not be the best policy. India is the great bugbear. Now what is our danger in India? Is it not the possibility of another mutiny? And what so likely to prevent any attempt of that kind as a cordial understanding between England and Russia? It is in the antagonism of these two Powers that the disaffected

would see their chance of success ; and in their union the hopelessness of an insurrection. Writing on the state of Central Asia in 1870, General Kaufmann says : ‘ There is reason to believe that the excited feeling which at this moment exists in the Khanates of Central Asia, bordering on our frontier, partly arises from the conviction which prevails throughout these countries, and more especially among the Afghans, that owing to an implacable hatred of one another, the Russians and English must sooner or later come to blows in Asia.’

What madness wantonly to foster such a feeling among the tribes of Asia, as so many among us are doing by a stupid policy of groundless suspicion ! England and Russia are, of all Powers, the two which ought, on grounds of self-interest alone, to be most closely united. What a prospect such a union would open out for the future of Asia, with all its undeveloped resources ! Our Indian trade would probably receive such development as would enable even political economists to dispense with the 7,000,000*l.* which we derive from the iniquitous traffic in opium.

It is thought by some that our Mussulman subjects in India would resent, perhaps in a practical way, any union between Russia and England having for its object the coercion of the Porte. But where is the proof ? Russia is also a great Mussulman Power ; and when has that fact ever hindered her from pursuing whatever policy seemed to her good in Turkey ? It is the policy of humouring the Porte, and accepting affronts from it which we should not endure from any Great Power, that is really likely to encourage disaffection among our Mahometan population in India. The Mussulmans of Russia look up with increased awe to the White Czar who is not afraid to bully the Sultan of Constan-

tinople. It was after our lavish expenditure of blood and treasure on behalf of the Sultan in the Crimea that the Mussulmans of India rose up in mutiny against us. Our being obliged to help the Sultan induced the belief that England was not so powerful as she seemed. It may suit Young Bengal to send to England addresses based on arguments obligingly supplied to them by some organs in the London press. The fact is, the Mussulmans find themselves outstripped everywhere in the battle of life by the cleverer and more subtle Hindoo. The Mussulmans are going gradually to the wall in the general competition; and they do not like it. Under these circumstances, it was a godsend to them to learn from English newspapers that they were still an important political power—so powerful as to be able to paralyze England's diplomacy in Europe. The sooner we dispel this delusion the better for both sides. Let perfect justice be done to the Mussulmans of India; but the moment any of them attempt to dictate England's policy in Europe, they ought to be told, with all courtesy but very decidedly, to mind their own business.

While I am writing the air is full of rumours of peace. There can be no peace till coercion is applied to Turkey. The man who still believes in the possibility of the Porte spontaneously improving the condition of the Rayahs is past the pale of argument. He is a monomaniac, and must be left in his delusion. But those who have no faith in Turkish reforms—what do they hope to gain by giving Turkey longer rope for self-destruction? England enjoys a commanding position just now, if Lord Derby only knew how to use it. The other Great Powers suspect and check each other, and Lord Derby might dictate his own policy, if he had

any policy to dictate, in the sure confidence that he could carry his point. It may not, almost certainly will not, be so a few months hence. And in the meantime the golden moments are slipping past, and Lord Derby remains faithful to his policy of negative criticism and languid inaction. Having succeeded in making England odious, he seems now in a fair way to make her ridiculous in addition. The childish game of 'Let us pretend,' which he is playing with General Ignatieff, is surely one of the most humiliating exhibitions of diplomatic imbecility that can be found in the history of English politics. It proves, among other things, that Lord Derby has never seriously cared to ameliorate the condition of the Christians of Turkey, except as a means to strengthen Ottoman rule. Encouraged, apparently, by the present lull in English feeling, he has gone back to the policy of last summer, and is, to speak the plain truth, employing all the influence and resources of England for the purpose of securing to the Turks an absolute impunity, in the event of their renewing the Bulgarian massacres. The Russian army is at this moment the only check on Turkish brutality, and to remove that check is to encourage a repetition of the horrors of Batak. Will the people of England accept the responsibility of so great a crime? If not, they must speak at once in tones which shall convince Lord Derby, once for all, that 'his employers'—to quote his own phrase—do not mean to be trifled with. Lord Derby is just now the only obstacle to peace. For peace can only be secured by granting administrative autonomy to the disturbed provinces, and the Porte will not grant administrative autonomy without coercion. The mere threat of coercion, as was proved in 1861, would bring Turkey on her knees in a

moment, and war would be avoided. Lord Derby's policy, on the other hand, makes war absolutely certain within the year—probably within a few weeks—and, in addition, leaves Russia mistress of the situation. I have not the fear of Russia that some have; but, if Russia is bent on mischief, certainly Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Derby have played her game with a degree of skill which even General Ignatieff could not have surpassed.

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I N D E X.

	PAGE
<i>Action's</i> Modern Cookery.....	24
Alpine Club Map of Switzerland	20
Alpine Guide (The)	20
<i>Amos's</i> Jurisprudence	6
——— Primer of the Constitution.....	6
<i>Anderson's</i> Strength of Materials	12
<i>Armitage's</i> Childhood of the English Nation	4
<i>Armstrong's</i> Organic Chemistry	12
<i>Arnold's</i> (Dr.) Christian Life	17
——— Lectures on Modern History	2
——— Miscellaneous Works	7
——— School Sermons	17
——— Sermons	17
——— (T.) Manual of English Literature	7
——— Beowulf	21
<i>Arnott's</i> Elements of Physics.....	11
Atelier (The) du Lys	20
Atherstone Priory.....	21
Autumn Holidays of a Country Parson ...	8
<i>Ayre's</i> Treasury of Bible Knowledge	9, 23
<i>Bacon's</i> Essays, by <i>Whately</i>	6
——— Life and Letters, by <i>Spedding</i> ...	6
——— Works	6
<i>Bain's</i> Mental and Moral Science.....	7
——— on the Senses and Intellect	7
——— Emotions and Will.....	7
<i>Baker's</i> Two Works on Ceylon	19
<i>Ball's</i> Guide to the Central Alps	20
——— Guide to the Western Alps.....	20
——— Guide to the Eastern Alps	20
<i>Bancroft's</i> Native Races of the Pacific.....	3
<i>Barry</i> on Railway Appliances	12
<i>Beaconsfield's</i> (Lord) Novels and Tales ..	20
<i>Becker's</i> Charicles and Gallus.....	20
<i>Beesly's</i> Gracchi, Marius, and Sulla	4
<i>Black's</i> Treatise on Brewing	23
<i>Blackley's</i> German-English Dictionary.....	9
<i>Blaine's</i> Rural Sports	22
<i>Bloxam's</i> Metals	12
<i>Bolland and Lang's</i> Aristotle's Politics.....	6
<i>Boulton</i> on 39 Articles.....	16
<i>Bourne's</i> Catechism of the Steam Engine .	16
——— Handbook of Steam Engine.....	16
——— Treatise on the Steam Engine ...	15
——— Improvements in the same.....	15
<i>Bowdler's</i> Family <i>Shakespeare</i>	21
<i>Bramley-Moore's</i> Six Sisters of the Valleys .	21
<i>Brand's</i> Dictionary of Science, Literature, and Art	13
<i>Brinkley's</i> Astronomy	10
<i>Brown's</i> Exposition of the 39 Articles.....	16

	PAGE
<i>Buckle's</i> History of Civilisation	2
——— Posthumous Remains	7
<i>Buckton's</i> Health in the House	14
<i>Bull's</i> Hints to Mothers	23
——— Maternal Management of Children .	23
Burgomaster's Family (The)	21
<i>Burke's</i> Vicissitudes of Families.....	5
Cabinet Lawyer.....	23
<i>Campbell's</i> Norway	20
<i>Capes's</i> Age of the Antonines.....	4
——— Early Roman Empire	4
<i>Cates's</i> Biographical Dictionary.....	5
——— and <i>Woodward's</i> Encyclopædia ...	3
<i>Cayley's</i> Iliad of Homer	21
Changed Aspects of Unchanged Truths ...	8
<i>Chesney's</i> Indian Polity	2
——— Modern Military Biography.....	2
——— Waterloo Campaign	3
<i>Church's</i> Sketches of Ottoman History ...	1
<i>Colenso</i> on Moabite Stone &c.	19
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Commonplace Philosopher in Town and Country	8
<i>Comte's</i> Positive Polity	5
<i>Congreve's</i> Politics of Aristotle	6
<i>Conington's</i> Translation of Virgil's <i>Æneid</i> ..	21
——— Miscellaneous Writings.....	8
<i>Contanseau's</i> Two French Dictionaries ..	8
<i>Conybeare and Howson's</i> Life and Epistles of St. Paul.....	17
Counsel and Comfort from a City Pulpit... ..	8
<i>Cox's</i> (G. W.) Aryan Mythology	3
——— Athenian Empire	4
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——— Greeks and Persians.....	4
——— History of Greece	3
——— Tales of Ancient Greece ...	21
<i>Creighton's</i> Age of Elizabeth	4
<i>Cresy's</i> Encyclopedia of Civil Engineering ..	16
Critical Essays of a Country Parson.....	8
<i>Crookes's</i> Anthracen	16
——— Chemical Analyses	14
——— Dyeing and Calico-printing	16
<i>Culley's</i> Handbook of Telegraphy.....	15
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<i>Davidson's</i> Introduction to the New Testament.....	18
<i>D'Aubigné's</i> Reformation	18
<i>De Caisne and Le Maout's</i> Botany	14

	PAGE		PAGE
<i>De Tocqueville's</i> Democracy in America...	5	<i>Hale's</i> Fall of the Stuarts.....	4
<i>Dobson</i> on the Ox	22	<i>Hartley</i> on the Air	10
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<i>Dowell's</i> History of Taxes	6	——— Polar World	12
<i>Doyle's</i> (R.) Fairyland.....	14	——— Sea and its Living Wonders ...	12
		——— Subterranean World.....	13
		——— Tropical World	12
<i>Eastlake's</i> Hints on Household Taste.....	15	<i>Haughton's</i> Animal Mechanics	11
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Elements of Botany.....	13	<i>Helmholtz</i> on Tone	11
<i>Ellicott's</i> Commentary on Ephesians	17	<i>Helmholtz's</i> Scientific Lectures	11
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——— Thessalonians	17	<i>Hobson's</i> Amateur Mechanic	15
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Elsa, a Tale of the Tyrolean Alps	21	<i>Howorth's</i> Mongols	3
Epochs of Ancient History.....	4	<i>Hullah's</i> History of Modern Music	13
——— Modern History	4	——— Transition Period	13
<i>Evans' (J.)</i> Ancient Stone Implements ...	13	<i>Hume's</i> Essays	7
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<i>Ewald's</i> History of Israel	18		
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		——— History of Rome	3
<i>Fairbairn's</i> Application of Cast and		Indian Alps	19
Wrought Iron to Building... ..	16	<i>Ingelow's</i> Poems	21
——— Information for Engineers.....	16		
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<i>Farrar's</i> Chapters on Language	8	——— Legends of the Monastic Orders	15
——— Families of Speech	8	——— Legends of the Saviour	15
<i>Finlason's</i> Judicial System	24	<i>Jenkin's</i> Electricity and Magnetism.....	12
<i>Fitzwygram</i> on Horses and Stables.....	22	<i>Jerram's</i> Lycidas of Milton	21
<i>Forbes's</i> Two Years in Fiji.....	19	<i>Jerrold's</i> Life of Napoleon	2
<i>Frampton's</i> (Bishop) Life	5	<i>Johnston's</i> Geographical Dictionary.....	9
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		<i>Kerl's</i> Metallurgy, by <i>Crookes</i> and <i>Röhrig</i> .	16
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<i>Ganol's</i> Elementary Physics	11	<i>Kirkman's</i> Philosophy	7
——— Natural Philosophy	11	<i>Knatchbull-Hugessen's</i> Whispers from	
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——— Personal Government of Charles I.	2	——— Higgleddy-Piggledy	20
——— First Two Stuarts	4	<i>Kuenen's</i> Prophets and Prophecy in Israel	17
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——— Mechanism	12	——— Leaders of Public Opinion.....	5
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Graver Thoughts of a Country Parson.....	8	Leisure Hours in Town	8
<i>Greville's</i> Journal	2	Lessons of Middle Age	8
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<i>Griffith's</i> Behind the Veil.....	18	<i>Lewis</i> on Authority	7
<i>Grohman's</i> Tyrol and the Tyrolese	19		
<i>Grove</i> (Sir W. R.) on Correlation of Physical Forces.....	11		
——— (F. C.) The Frosty Caucasus	19		
<i>Gwill's</i> Encyclopædia of Architecture.....	15		

	PAGE		PAGE
<i>Liddell and Scott's</i> Greek-English Lexicons	9	<i>Mill</i> (J. S.) Representative Government ...	5
<i>Lindley and Moore's</i> Treasury of Botany..	22	— System of Logic	6
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— German Dictionary ...	9	<i>Miller's</i> Elements of Chemistry	14
— (W.) Edward the Third.....	2	— Inorganic Chemistry.....	12
— Lectures on History of		<i>Mitchell's</i> Manual of Assaying	16
— England	2	Modern Novelist's Library	21
— Old and New St. Paul's		<i>Monsell's</i> Spiritual Songs.....	18
<i>Loudon's</i> Encyclopædia of Agriculture ..	16	<i>Moore's</i> Irish Melodies, Illustrated Edition	15
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<i>Ludlow's</i> American War.....	4	<i>Müller's</i> Chips from a German Workshop.	8
<i>Lyra Germanica</i>	18	— Science of Language	8
		— Science of Religion	3
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— Lays of Ancient Rome	14, 21	<i>Nicols's</i> Puzzle of Life	13
— Life and Letters.....	4	<i>Northcott's</i> Lathes & Turning	15
— Miscellaneous Writings	7		
— Speeches	7	<i>O'Connor's</i> Commentary on Hebrews	18
— Works	1	— Romans	18
— Writings, Selections from	7	— St. John	18
<i>MacColl's</i> Eastern Question	1	<i>Osborn's</i> Islam	3
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<i>Macleod's</i> Economical Philosophy.....	6	— logy of Vertebrate Animals	12
— Theory and Practice of Banking	24		
— Elements of Banking.....	24	<i>Pack's</i> Guide to the Pyrenees	20
<i>Mademoiselle Mori</i>	21	<i>Pattison's</i> Casaubon.....	5
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<i>Marshall's</i> Physiology	14	<i>Pewtner's</i> Comprehensive Specifier	23
<i>Marshman's</i> Life of Havelock	5	<i>Pierce's</i> Chess Problems	23
<i>Martineau's</i> Christian Life	19	<i>Pol's</i> Game of Whist	23
— Hours of Thought.....	19	<i>Preece & Siveuright's</i> Telegraphy.....	12
— Hymns.....	18	Present-Day Thoughts.....	8
<i>Maunder's</i> Biographical Treasury	5, 23	<i>Proctor's</i> Astronomical Essays	10
— Geographical Treasury	23	— Moon	10
— Historical Treasury	23	— Orbs around Us	10
— Scientific and Literary Treasury	23	— Other Worlds than Ours	10
— Treasury of Knowledge	9, 23	— Saturn	10
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<i>Maxwell's</i> Theory of Heat	12	— Sun	10
<i>May's</i> History of Democracy.....	2	— Transits of Venus	10
— History of England	2	— Two Star Atlases.....	10
<i>Melville's</i> Digby Grand	21	— Universe	10
— General Bounce	21	<i>Prothero's</i> De Montfort	2
— Gladiators	21	Public Schools Atlas of Ancient Geography	9
— Good for Nothing	21	— Atlas of Modern Geography	9
— Holmby House	21		
— Interpreter	21	<i>Rawlinson's</i> Parthia.....	3
— Kate Coventry	21	— Sassanians	3
— Queen's Mariæ	21	Recreations of a Country Parson	8
<i>Mendelssohn's</i> Letters	4	<i>Redgrave's</i> Dictionary of Artists	14
<i>Merivale's</i> Fall of the Roman Republic ..	3	<i>Rece's</i> Residence in Vienna and Berlin ..	19
— General History of Rome	3	<i>Reilly's</i> Map of Mont Blanc	20
— Roman Triumvirates.....	4	— Monte Rosa	20
— Romans under the Empire	3	<i>Reresby's</i> Memoirs	5
<i>Merrifield's</i> Arithmetic and Mensuration..	12	<i>Reynardson's</i> Down the Road	22
<i>Miles</i> on Horse's Foot and Horse Shoeing	22		
— on Horse's Teeth and Stables.....	22		
<i>Mill</i> (J.) on the Mind	6		
— Dissertations & Discussions.....	6		
— Essays on Religion	17		
— Hamilton's Philosophy	6		
— (J. S.) Liberty	5		
— Political Economy	5		

	PAGE		PAGE
<i>Rich's</i> Dictionary of Antiquities	9	<i>Todd</i> on Parliamentary Government.....	2
<i>Rivers's</i> Rose Amateur's Guide.....	13	<i>Trench's</i> Realities of Irish Life	7
<i>Rogers's</i> Eclipse of Faith.....	17	<i>Trollope's</i> Barchester Towers.....	21
— Defence of Eclipse of Faith	17	— Warden	21
— Essays.....	5	<i>Twiss's</i> Law of Nations	6
<i>Rogel's</i> Thesaurus of English Words and		<i>Tyndall's</i> American Lectures on Light ...	11
Phrases	8	— Diamagnetism.....	11
<i>Ronald's</i> Fly-Fisher's Entomology	22	— Fragments of Science.....	11
<i>Roscoe's</i> Outlines of Civil Procedure.....	6	— Heat a Mode of Motion	11
<i>Rothschild's</i> Israelites	18	— Lectures on Electricity	11
		— Lectures on Light	11
		— Lectures on Sound.....	11
		— Molecular Physics.....	11
<i>Sandars's</i> Justinian's Institutes	6	Unawares	21
<i>Sankey's</i> Sparta and Thebes	4	<i>Unwin's</i> Machine Design	12
<i>Savile</i> on Apparitions.....	8	<i>Ur's</i> Dictionary of Arts, Manufactures,	
— on Primitive Faith	17	and Mines	16
<i>Schellen's</i> Spectrum Analysis.....	10		
<i>Scott's</i> Lectures on the Fine Arts	14	<i>Vaughan's</i> Trident, Crescent, and Cross... 18	
— Poems	14		
<i>Seaside</i> Musing.....	8	<i>Walker</i> on Whist	23
<i>Seeborn's</i> Oxford Reformers of 1498.....	3	<i>Warburton's</i> Edward the Third	4
— Protestant Revolution	4	<i>Watson's</i> Geometry	12
<i>Sewell's</i> History of France	2	<i>Watts's</i> Dictionary of Chemistry	14
— Passing Thoughts on Religion ...	18	<i>Webb's</i> Objects for Common Telescopes ...	10
— Preparation for Communion	18	<i>Weinhold's</i> Experimental Physics.....	11
— Questions of the Day	18	<i>Wellington's</i> Life, by Gleig	5
— Self-Examination for Confirmation	18	<i>Whately's</i> English Synonymes	8
— Stories and Tales	21	— Logic	6
— Thoughts for the Age	18	— Rhetoric	6
<i>Shelley's</i> Workshop Appliances	12	<i>White and Riddle's</i> Latin Dictionaries ...	9
<i>Short's</i> Church History	3	<i>Whitworth's</i> Measuring Machine	15
<i>Smith's</i> (Sydney) Essays	7	<i>Wilcocks's</i> Sea-Fisherman	22
— Wit and Wisdom	7	<i>Williams's</i> Aristotle's Ethics.....	6
— (Dr. R. A.) Air and Rain	10	<i>Willich's</i> Popular Tables	24
— (R. B.) Rome and Carthage	4	<i>Wood's</i> (J. G.) Bible Animals	12
<i>Southey's</i> Poetical Works.....	21	— Homes without Hands ...	12
<i>Stanley's</i> History of British Birds	13	— Insects at Home	12
<i>Stephen's</i> Ecclesiastical Biography.....	5	— Insects Abroad.....	12
<i>Stonehenge</i> on the Dog.....	22	— Out of Doors	12
— on the Greyhound	22	— Strange Dwellings	12
<i>Stoney</i> on Strains	16	— (J. T.) Ephesus	19
<i>Stubbs's</i> Early Plantagenets	4	<i>Woodward's</i> Geology	13
<i>Sunday</i> Afternoons at the Parish Church of		<i>Wyatt's</i> History of Prussia	2
a University City	8		
<i>Supernatural</i> Religion	18	<i>Yonge's</i> English-Greek Lexicons	9
<i>Swinbourne's</i> Picture Logic	6	— Horace	21
		<i>Youatt</i> on the Dog	22
<i>Taylor's</i> History of India	2	— on the Horse	22
— Manual of Ancient History	4		
— Manual of Modern History	4	<i>Zeller's</i> Plato.....	3
— (Jeremy) Works, edited by Eden. 18		— Socrates	3
<i>Text-Books</i> of Science.....	12	— Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics... 3	
<i>Thomé's</i> Structural and Physiological Bot-		<i>Zimmern's</i> Life of Schopenhauer	4
any	12, 13		
<i>Thomson's</i> Laws of Thought ..	7		
<i>Thorpe's</i> Quantitative Analysis	12		
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